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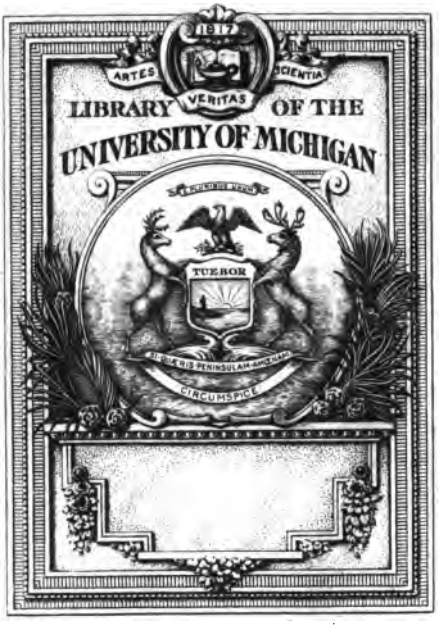

THE GIFT OF

Prof. Aubrey Tealdi

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Cesare Borgia and Rosa Vanozza.

Photo-Etching. — From Painting by Edmund Garrett.

CELEBRATED CRIMES

BY

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

Illustrated

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PREFACE.

In preparing for publication the following work of one of the most popular French writers of the present day, the translator has carefully removed from it several of the blemishes of the modern school of literature to which it belongs, — levity of expression on serious subjects, indelicacy of language, and a desire to gratify the vulgar appetite for horrible and revolting details. These faults vitiate many productions which are otherwise of value and importance; and which, simply by revision, may be accommodated to correct taste and moral feeling, and rendered not only unexceptionable, but interesting and useful. This, it is believed, will be found to be the case with the "Crimes Célèbres" of M. Alexandre Dumas.

Several of the histories in the collection are founded chiefly on the "Causes Célèbres" of Gayot de Pithaval, that unparalleled storehouse of the

romance of real life. M. Dumas, however, has divested them of the formality of the old French lawyer, suppressed or condensed the tedious technical pleadings and details of judicial proceedings, and given rapidity, animation, and dramatic effect to the narrative. At the same time, not only in these stories, but in those which he has derived from other sources, he appears to have been scrupulously accurate with regard to facts; having collated the authorities within his reach, and given every incident according to the most satisfactory evidence which he could obtain by his researches.

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THE BORGIAS.

CELEBRATED CRIMES.

THE BORGIAS.

CHAPTER I.

On the 8th of April, 1492, in a chamber of the Careggi Palace, situated about a league from Florence, three men were grouped around a bed, upon which a fourth was lying in the agonies of death. The first, seated near his feet, and half concealed by the curtains of gold brocade (as if to hide his tears), was Ermolao Barbaro, the author of the treatises "On Celibacy" and "Studies on Pliny," who, being at Rome as the accredited ambassador of the Florentine republic, had been raised in the preceding year to the patriarchate of Aquileia by Pope Innocent VIII. The second, kneeling and still pressing the hands of the dying man between his own, was Angelo Politiano, the Catullus of the fifteenth century, whose mind was so imbued by the classic spirit of antiquity that we might almost consider him to have been a poet of the Augustan period. The third, standing near his head, and watching with the deepest grief the coming shadows of death over the face of the sufferer, was the illustrious Pico of Mirandola, who at twenty years of age had offered to reply in twenty-two languages to seven hundred questions

to be proposed by twenty of the most learned men of the age, if they could be assembled in Florence.

The object of this solicitude was Lorenzo the Magnificent, who, attacked at the beginning of the year by a violent fever, which was aggravated by the hereditary malady of his family, the gout, and finding that the drinks of dissolved pearls, which the charlatan Leoni di Spoleto had ordered him to take, as if to regulate his remedies rather by the superfluity of wealth than the urgency of disease, were powerless and vain, and that he must resign the charms of social intercourse, — the poets, whose lays had been so long his recreation, and the luxuries of his palaces, — had required for the absolution of his sins the presence of the Dominican Girolamo Francesco Savonarola. Nor was it without some secret dread that he awaited the arrival of this stern and fearful preacher, whose voice shook Florence, and upon whose pardon his hopes of future happiness depended. For Savonarola was one of those men of marble who come, like the statue of the Commander in "Don Juan," to knock at the gates of the voluptuous, and warn them, amid the riot of their festivals and orgies, that it is nevertheless the hour to direct their thoughts toward heaven. Born at Ferrara, to which his family, one of the most illustrious of Padua, had been invited by the Marquis Nicola d'Este, carried away by his impassioned sensibility, he had fled at twenty-three years of age from his father's house, and had made his religious profession of faith in the cloister of the Dominicans of Florence. There, selected to give lectures in philosophy, the young novice had at first to contend with the defects of a harsh and feeble voice, a defective pronunciation, and the total prostration of physical strength, caused by an excess of discipline. From that period he had devoted himself to

the most absolute seclusion; he disappeared amid the recesses of his convent, as if the tomb had closed on his career. Kneeling in constant prayer before a crucifix, excited by his penances and vigils, meditation became ecstasy, and then it was he first felt that secret prophetic impulse which urged him to preach the reformation of the Church.

The reformation of Savonarola was more reverential than that of Luther. Unlike the German monk, he was guided not by reason, but enthusiasm; he was not the theologian, but the prophet. Bowing to the authority of the Church, he stood erect before the power of the State. Religion and liberty to him were equally sacred; and Lorenzo appeared not less guilty in overthrowing the one than Innocent VIII. in dishonouring the other. Consequently, so long as he was Lorenzo the Magnificent, Savonarola had resisted all entreaties to sanction by his presence a power he had regarded as illegitimate; but Lorenzo had summoned him to the bed of death; the man and events wore a changed aspect; the austere preacher yielded, and barefooted and uncovered he obeyed the summons, trusting not only to save the soul of a dying penitent, but to obtain the liberty of the republic.

Lorenzo awaited his presence with impatience and anxiety. On the sound of his footstep, the dying man's pale complexion assumed a more cadaverous hue, and, raising himself, he signified by a gesture his desire to be alone. His friends obeyed; and scarcely had they retired by one door, when, pale and unmoved, the monk appeared upon the threshold of another. Lorenzo, reading on his brow the impassive inflexibility of a marble statue, breathed a sigh, so deep that it might have seemed his last, and fell back upon his bed. The monk glanced around the room, as if to assure himself that he was

alone; then, with a slow, solemn step, he advanced toward the bed. Lorenzo regarded him with terror, and exclaimed, as he stood near him:—

"Oh, my father! I have greatly sinned."

"The mercy of God is infinite," replied the monk; "and I am charged with its divine extension toward thee!"

"And think you, then, that God will, indeed, forgive?" said the sufferer, gathering fresh hope from these unexpected words.

"Thy sins and thy crimes God will entirely forgive!" replied Savonarola. "He will forgive, as regards thy sins, thy frivolous pleasures, adulterous enjoyments, and obscene festivals; and for thy crimes, God will forgive thee, — the reward of two thousand florins to him who should bring thee the heads of Dietisalvi, Nerone Nigi, Angelo Antinori, and of Nicolo Soderini, and of twice that sum to him who should deliver them to you alive. He will forgive thee the death upon the scaffold or the gibbet of the son of Papi Orlandi, Francesco di Brisighella, Bernardo Nardi, Jacopo Frescobaldi, Amoretto Baldovinetti, Pietro Balducci, Bernardo di Baudino, Francesco Frescobaldi, and of more than three hundred others, whose names, less celebrated, were yet not less dear to Florence!" And, as Savonarola slowly pronounced each name, his eye intently fixed upon the dying man, Lorenzo answered by a groan, which proved how accurate was their fearful enumeration.

"And think you, father," replied he, the accents of doubt still faltering upon his lips, "that of my sins and crimes God will forgive me all?"

"All; but upon three conditions!"

"What are they?"

"The first is, that you feel an entire faith in the power and mercy of God."

"Father," replied Lorenzo, with earnestness, "that faith I feel in the inmost recesses of my heart."

"The second," said Savonarola, "is, that you restore the property you have unjustly confiscated and retained!"

"And will time be allowed me for this?"

"God will grant it thee," answered the monk.

Lorenzo closed his eyes for undisturbed reflection; then, after a short silence, "Yes, father, I will do it," he replied.

"The third," resumed Savonarola, "is, that you will restore the ancient liberty and independence of the republic!"

Lorenzo raised himself; by a convulsive effort, upon his bed; his eyes interrogated every feature of the Dominican, as if he sought to know whether he had not deceived himself, — that he had, indeed, heard correctly. Savonarola repeated the words.

"Never, never!" exclaimed Lorenzo, again falling upon his bed, with gestures of denial, "never!"

Without one word of reply, the monk turned to depart.

"Father, father!" exclaimed the dying man, "quit me not thus! Have pity on me!"

"Have pity upon Florence!" said the monk.

"But, father," exclaimed Lorenzo, "Florence is free, Florence is prosperous!"

"Florence is enslaved; Florence is poor, — poor in genius, in money, and in courage: in genius, because Lorenzo will be succeeded by his son Pietro; in money, because it is by draining the resources of the republic that thou hast maintained the regal state of thy family and thy commercial credit; in courage, because thou hast deprived the recognised magistracy of the authority intrusted to them by the constitution, turning thy fellow-citizens

from the paths of military and civil duty, in which, before they were enervated by thy luxury, they had displayed the antique virtues, the bygone greatness of their race; insomuch that when the day shall dawn on Florence, — and it is not far off," continued he, his eyes fixed and glowing, as if he read and were the prophet of the future, — "when foreign hordes shall descend the mountains, the walls of our cities shall fall at the mere sound of the trumpet, as those of Jericho of old."

"And you wish that I should dispossess myself, upon the bed of death, of that power which has been the glory of my life!" exclaimed Lorenzo.

"I do not; it is thy God!" coldly replied Savonarola.

"Impossible, impossible!" murmured Lorenzo.

"Then die as thou hast lived, amid thy courtiers and adulators; and, as they have condemned thy body, so let them sacrifice thy soul!" and with these words the Dominican, unmoved by the cries of the dying Lorenzo, went from the room, with the same unimpassioned features, the same measured step, that had marked his entrance. He seemed a spirit, freed already from the trammels of earth, soaring beyond the interests and passions of the world.

At the cry which burst from Lorenzo as he saw Savonarola disappear, Ermolao, Politiano, and Mirandola re-entered the room, and found their friend grasping convulsively in his hands a rich crucifix, which he had taken from the pillow of his bed. In vain did they seek to reinspire hope. Lorenzo replied to their friendly encouragement only by tears and broken sobs; and, one hour after his interview with Savonarola, with his lips still pressed upon the emblem of the Saviour, he expired in the arms of these three men, of whom the most favoured, although all were young, was not destined to survive

Statue of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

Photo-Etching. — From a Photograph.

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him beyond two years. "As his death was the necessary precursor of calamity, Heaven," said Nicolo Machiavelli, "deigned to presage the coming evil by the most undoubted omens: lightning struck the dome of the church of Santa Reparata, and Rodrigo Borgia was elected Pope."

Toward the close of the fifteenth century, — that is to say, at the period when this recital commences, — the place of St. Peter at Rome was far from presenting that imposing sight which now bursts upon those who approach it by the Piazza Dei Rusticucci. The basilica of Constantine no longer existed; and that of Michael Angelo, the *chef-d'œuvre* of thirty Popes, the labour of three centuries, at the expense of two hundred and sixty millions, was not then erected. The ancient edifice, which had withstood the slow decay of eleven hundred and forty-five years, had toward 1440 fallen into so ruinous a state that Nicholas V., that tasteful precursor of Julius II. and of Leo X., had pulled it down, as well as the temple of Probus Anicius, and laid, in the space they had occupied, the foundations of a new church to be erected by the architects Rosselini and Baptista Alberti. But upon the death of Nicholas, the Venetian Paul II. being unable to advance more than five thousand crowns toward the continuance of his predecessor's design, the building, then scarcely raised above ground, was stopped, and thus presented in its formless state an appearance even more saddening than a ruin.

For the place itself, it had not, as may be readily understood from the preceding description, either its beautiful colonnade by Bernini, its fountains, or Egyptian obelisk, which, according to Pliny, had been erected by Pharaoh Nuncorus, in the city of Heliopolis, and thence

brought to Rome by Caligula, who placed it in the circus of Nero, where it stood until 1586. But as the circus was situated upon the very space where the cathedral now arises, and as this obelisk covered, by its base, the ground-plan of the present sacristy, it seemed to shoot up like an enormous needle, amid the half-formed columns of the unequally raised walls, and the rough unfinished blocks of stone. To the right arose the Vatican, that splendid Tower of Babel, upon which, for a thousand years, all the celebrated architects of the Roman school have exercised their genius; but at this period it had not its richly decorated chapels, twelve great halls, twenty-two courts, thirty-two staircases, and two thousand chambers; for Sixtus V., who effected so much in the five years of his papacy, had not yet been enabled to add that extensive building which commands towards the east the court of St. Damasus; but it was yet the old and consecrated palace, hallowed by remembrances of the olden time, in which Charlemagne enjoyed the hospitality of Leo III., when he received from him the imperial crown of the West.

On the 9th of August, 1492, it seemed as if the entire population of Rome, from the Gate of the People to the Coliseum, and from the baths of Diocletian to the castle of San Angelo, had assembled by appointment in the place of St. Peter. For so dense was the multitude that its pressure filled the streets adjacent, and radiating from one common centre, like the rays of the star, the vast mass was seen ascending the basilica, grouping themselves among the blocks of stones, clinging around the columns, winding along the broken outline of the walls, disappearing at intervals within the different houses, and reappearing at the windows in such a manner that each casement seemed walled up with heads. The eyes of all,

from every quarter, were intently fixed upon one part of the Vatican, for the conclave was there assembled; and as Innocent VIII. had been dead sixteen days, the cardinals were proceeding to the election of the new Pope.

Rome is truly the city of elections. From her foundation to the present day, — that is, during the course of about twenty-six centuries, — she has constantly elected her kings, consuls, tribunes, emperors, and Popes: hence, during the sitting of the conclave, Rome seemed excited by a strange fever, urging all ranks towards the Vatican, or Monte Cavallo, according as the scarlet assembly was held in the one palace or the other.

The election of a new Pope is of universal interest to Christendom; as, from the days of St. Peter to those of Gregory XVI., the reign of every Pope may be averaged at eight years, so, according to the character of the elected, is this period one of tranquillity or of disorder, justice or venality, peace or war. And never, possibly, from the hour when the first successor of St. Peter ascended the throne of the pontiffs, had so much inquietude been exhibited as that which was now observable among the people. Nor was it without cause, for Innocent VIII., who had obtained the honourable title of the Father of his People, arising very probably from the fact of his having increased the number of his subjects by eight sons and as many daughters, had died, as has been stated, after a licentious life, exhausted by a lingering disorder, during the progress of which, if we may rely upon the statement of Stefano Infessura, no less than two hundred and twenty murders had been committed in the streets of Rome.

During the temporary suspension of the papal authority, the executive devolves upon the president of the apostolic chamber; but its duties, — the coinage of

money with his name and arms, the removal of the ring from the finger of the deceased Pope, the embalming and other ceremonies, and the interment, after nine days of funeral obsequies, of the body in the niche provisionally appointed, until the death of the succeeding Pope should consign it to its final place of rest, — these, together with the necessity of closing up the door of the conclave, and the window of the balcony from whence the election is proclaimed, had not permitted a moment's attention to be paid to municipal regulations, so that assassination had remained unchecked, if not encouraged; and the people now loudly demanded the energetic repression of this increasing evil.

The eyes of the spectators were therefore, as has been said, fixed upon the Vatican, and particularly upon a chimney whence the first signal should issue, when suddenly, at the hour when the Ave Maria announces the close of day, cries mixed with shouts of laughter arose from the crowd, — a discordant murmur of raillery and menace; for, at that moment, a small column of smoke was discerned ascending like a fleecy vapour to the sky. And this announced that Rome was yet without a ruler, the world still deprived of a pontiff; for this smoke was the sign that the ballot lists were burnt, and that the cardinals had not yet decided the election. No sooner was it seen than the countless crowds, well aware that until the assembly of the cardinals in the morning there was nothing further to expect, retired in hurried throngs, and a jesting humour, as if after the last discharge of fireworks; so that in the place where, but a few minutes before, a nation seemed collected, a few groups only were now idly scattered, composed of those whom curiosity might detain, or of others, who, from residing in the immediate neighbourhood, were

less eager to depart. Even these imperceptibly diminished, for at half-past nine the streets of Rome were insecure; and after the hour struck, the hurried step of some casual passer-by was alone occasionally heard, doors were successively closed, the lights in the windows gradually disappeared, until as ten was repeated from the chimes around, except from one window of the Vatican, whence the lamp still threw its fitful light around, houses, squares, and streets were alike wrapped in darkness.

At this moment a man enveloped in a mantle, whose dimly shadowed form arose against one of the unfinished columns of the basilica, glided slowly and cautiously among the blocks of stone scattered around its foundations, and advanced to the fountain which then formed the centre of the square, on the spot where the obelisk now stands; on reaching which he stopped, and, concealed by the obscurity of the night and the deeper shadow of the monument, he glanced furtively around as if to be sure he was unobserved, then, drawing his sword, he struck three times upon the pavement, producing at each blow light sparks from its point. This signal, for it was one, was not lost; the lamp in the Vatican was extinguished, and at the same moment a packet was thrown out, which fell at a few paces from him; guided by its ringing sound as it reached the pavement, he instantly seized it, in spite of the darkness, and hurried away. He had proceeded thus about half-way down the Borgo Vecchio, when he turned to the right and entered a street, at the other extremity of which was a figure of a Madonna with its lamp; approaching this, he took from his pocket the enclosure he had picked up, which in fact was merely a Roman crown, only that it was hollow and divided, and contained in

the interior a letter, which, notwithstanding the risk of being recognised, the stranger instantly read, — so great was his anxiety to be acquainted with its contents. It was at the risk of being recognised, because in his eagerness this nocturnal correspondent had thrown back the hood of his mantle, so as entirely to expose his features to the light of the lamp, by which it was easy to discern a handsome youth apparently about twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, dressed in a violet-coloured doublet, open at the shoulders, and slashed at the elbows, with a cap of the same colour, the long black plume of which waved darkly around him. He stopped, however, but a short time, for hardly had he read the billet he had so mysteriously received, when he replaced it in his silver pocket-book; and, readjusting his mantle so as entirely to conceal his figure, he walked on with a rapid step, traversed Borgo San Spirito, and followed the street Della Lingara to where it opens upon the church Regina Cœli. On reaching this place he knocked thrice quickly at the door of a large house, which was instantly opened; then, rapidly ascending the staircase, he entered a room, where two ladies awaited his arrival with the utmost impatience.

On his entrance they both exclaimed together, "Well, well, Francesco, what news?"

"Excellent! mother, — excellent! sister," replied the youth, embracing the one, and extending his hand to the other. "My father has gained three votes to-day, but he requires yet six to obtain the majority."

"And cannot these be purchased?" asked the elder of the two ladies, while the other, in default of speech, interrogated him by a look.

"Yes, yes, mother," replied the youth. "That is precisely the point which my father has well considered.

He gives to the Cardinal Orsini his palace at Rome, with his two villas of Monticello and Soriano; to Cardinal Colonna, the abbey of Subiaco; to Cardinal San Angelo, the bishopric of Porto, with his furniture and wines; to the cardinal of Parma, the town of Nepi; the cardinal of Genoa, the church of Santa Maria-in-via-lata; and to Cardinal Savelli, the church of Santa Maria Maggiore and the town of Civita Castellana; and as for Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, he is already aware that we sent him two days ago four mules heavily laden with money, and gold and silver plate; and with this supply he has engaged to give five thousand ducats to the cardinal patriarch of Venice."

"But what measures shall we adopt to intimate the intentions of Rodrigo to the others?"

"My father has provided for this also, and points out to us an easy way; you know, mother, with what ceremony their dinner is now carried to the cardinals?"

"Yes, in a basket, with the coat of arms of the individual for whom the meal is destined."

"My father has bribed the bishop who inspects this, and to-morrow being a flesh day, chickens will be sent to the Cardinals Orsini, Colonna, Savelli, of San Angelo, of Parma, and of Genoa, each of which will contain a formal donation made by me, in my father's name, of houses, palaces, or churches."

"Excellent!" exclaimed the inquirer; "everything, I am now convinced, will proceed as we could wish."

"And by the grace of God," replied the younger lady, with a derisive smile, "our father will be elected Pope."

"A fortunate event for us," said Francesco.

"Oh! and for Christianity," answered his sister, with an expression still more sarcastic.

"Lucrezia, Lucrezia," said her mother, "you are unworthy of the happiness we expect."

"What matters it, if nevertheless it comes? Moreover, you remember the proverb, 'The Lord blesses the increase of families,' — a blessing especially due unto our own, considering that our domestic life has borne such a close resemblance to the patriarchal."

As she uttered this, she cast upon her brother a glance of such meaning that even he was abashed; but as the pleasures of his incestuous love were for the moment of less interest, he summoned four servants, and whilst they armed themselves to accompany him, he drew up and signed the six donations which were on the morrow to be sent to the cardinals; and, not wishing to be seen at their abodes, he thought of profiting by the night, and thus delivering the papers unobserved to those who had agreed to convey them at the dinner hour as described. This done, and the servants ready, Francesco departed, leaving his mother and sister to indulge their golden reveries of coming greatness.

Eager and excited as before, the populace thronged, at break of day, to the square before the Vatican, where again, at ten o'clock, the appearance of the smoke, still announcing that no one of the cardinals had obtained the requisite majority of votes, provoked the jeers and murmurs of the crowd. It was, nevertheless, rumoured that the election was narrowed to the choice of one of three candidates, Rodrigo Borgia, Giuliano della Rovere, and Ascanio Sforza; for the people were ignorant of the fact of the four mules, and the treasures they bore to the last-mentioned cardinal, on account of which he had ceded his votes to his competitor.

Amid the agitation that this fresh disappointment had excited, the sound of sacred music was heard, and

a procession of monks advanced, headed by the president of the apostolic chamber, who had proceeded from the Ara Cœli to the capitol, visiting the principal Madonnas, and most frequented churches, to obtain the intercession of Heaven for the prompt election of a Pope. As soon as the silver crucifix which preceded it was seen, the deepest silence prevailed; the people simultaneously knelt, and an impressive silence succeeded to the noise and tumult which had hitherto prevailed, and which was every moment assuming a more menacing character. Thus many thought this procession had as much of policy as of religion in its design; and that its influence must be as effective upon earth as in heaven. At any rate, had this scheme been projected by the cardinal president, he had not deceived himself as to its effect: the result was as he wished; the procession moved on, the laughter and raillery continued, but the threatening cries of the multitude were heard no more.

Thus the day glided away, for at Rome no one works; men are there either cardinals or valets, and live they know not how. The crowd was still, therefore, of the densest, when toward two o'clock another procession, which had as much effect in causing commotion as the other had in imposing silence, traversed in its turn the place of St. Peter, — it was the procession of the cardinals' dinner. The people welcomed its approach with their habitual shouts of laughter; irreverent as they were, they little knew that with this procession, much more efficacious than the last, the Pope had entered the Vatican. Day closed as before; expectation was again defeated; at half-past eight the customary signal of the smoke was seen. But as at the same time a whispered rumour from the Vatican was spread, announcing that

in all probability the election would be decided on the morrow, this signal was observed with patience.

Dark and stormy the day broke on the following morning, the 11th of August, 1492; but the crowd was still the same. To the people, indeed, this weather was a blessing, for though they might still suffer from heat, they were secured from the more scorching rays of the sun. Toward nine o'clock a violent storm burst in terrific fury over the Transtevere; but rain, lightning, and thunder — of what consequence were they to a people expecting a new Pope? The election had been promised; and it was easy to perceive that, if the day passed without it, a tumult would certainly ensue. Nine, half-past nine, the minute-hand advanced toward ten; no event occurred to destroy or excite hope. At last the first stroke of ten was heard, the chimney attracted all eyes; slowly the bells tolled the hour, every note falling on the hearts of the people. The last stroke sounded; its vibrations faintly faded on the ear, and a loud shout, echoing from one thousand voices, succeeded to the stillness which had prevailed. "Non v' è fumo," — "There is no smoke;" that is to say, "We have a Pope!"

The rain fell unregarded, so great was the excitement and the joy of the populace. A stone was detached from a window which had been lately walled up, and on which attention was now centred; a general shout welcomed its descent; by degrees the opening was enlarged, and in a few minutes it was sufficiently wide to enable a man to advance upon the balcony. This was the Cardinal Ascanio Sforza; but as he stepped forth, frightened by the rain and lightning, he hesitated and drew back; immediately there burst from the multitude around cries mingled with imprecations and threats

that they would demolish the Vatican, and seek themselves the Pope. The cardinal, more alarmed by this tempest of human passion than by the storm which darkened the face of heaven, again advanced, and between the interval of two terrific claps of thunder, amid a silence incomprehensible to those who had witnessed the preceding outburst, he read the following announcement: "I announce to you tidings of great joy; the most eminent and reverend Signor Rodrigo Lenzuoli Borgia, archbishop of Valencia, cardinal deacon of San Nicolo-in-Carcere, vice-chancellor of the Church, has been elected Pope, and has assumed the title of Alexander VI."

This nomination gave the most singular satisfaction. Rodrigo Borgia, it is true, had the reputation of being a dissolute man, but libertinage had ascended the throne with Sixtus IV. and Innocent, so that the anomalous position of a Pope with a mistress and five children was by no means new to the Romans. But it was important that the power of the State should be confided to an energetic mind; and it was still more important for the tranquillity of Rome that the new Pope should inherit rather the sword of St. Paul than the keys of St. Peter. Thus the essential character of the festivals given upon this occasion was far more warlike than religious, and had a greater likeness to the election of a young conqueror to a throne than to the elevation of an old pontiff to the papal chair.

With regard to the new Pope, he had no sooner discharged the ceremonial duties which were consequent upon his elevation, and paid his debts of simony, than from the heights of the Vatican he surveyed the plains of Europe, that vast political chess-board, the movement of whose pieces he hoped to govern according to the in-

clinations of his genius. It was one of those epochs of exciting interest when everything fluctuates between the period which is finished and the era which commences. Turkey, Spain, France, and Germany were successively assuming that weight in the political scale whose influence must so powerfully affect the future interests of the minor States. We will, therefore, with Alexander, cast a rapid glance around, and review their respective position as regarded Italy, the possession of which they alike coveted as a prey.

Constantine Paleologus Dragozes, besieged by 300,000 Turks, after he had in vain appealed to Christendom for support, unwilling to survive the loss of his empire, had been found mingled with the slain near the gate Tophana; and on the 30th of May, 1453, Mahomet II. had entered Constantinople, where, after a reign which bestowed upon him the surname of Fatile, or the Conqueror, he died leaving two sons, the eldest of whom ascended the throne as Bajazet II. But this did not occur with the tranquillity that both his right of primogeniture and the choice of his father should have guaranteed. Djem, his younger brother, better known by the name of Zizime, had contested the succession upon the ground that he was in fact Porphyrogenitus, — that is to say, born during the reign of Mahomet, — whilst Bajazet, born prior to that period, could be considered only as the son of a private person. This was chicanery, and of the worst kind; but there, where power is all in all, and right and justice are of no consideration, it was sufficient to excite war.

The two brothers, each commanding a large army, met in conflict in Asia, in 1482. Djem was defeated, and hotly pursued by his brother, who allowed him no time to rally his broken forces; he was obliged to embark in

Cilicia, and to take refuge at Rhodes, where he besought the protection of the Knights of St. John. But they, not daring to extend this protection, conveyed him to France, and guarded him with jealous care in one of their commanderies, in spite of the reclamations of Caib-Bey, Sultan of Egypt, who, having rebelled against Bajazet, desired to legitimise his defection by the presence of the young prince in his army.

A similar demand, to suit the same political purpose, had been successively made by Mathias Corvinus, King of Hungary; by Ferdinand, King of Aragon and Sicily; and by Ferdinand, King of Naples. Bajazet, well aware of the importance of such a rival in the hands of an opponent, had sent ambassadors to Charles VIII., engaging, should he undertake to keep Djem in his custody, not only to pay a considerable pension, but to yield the sovereignty of the Holy Land to France, as soon as Jerusalem should be conquered from the Sultan of Egypt, which offer the king had accepted. But Innocent VIII. had thereupon interposed, and in his turn had claimed Djem, apparently to make the rights of the proscribed a pretext for a crusade against the Turks, but in reality to get possession of the forty thousand ducats promised by Bajazet to one of the European princes, whoever he might be, who would imprison his brother. Charles VIII., not daring to refuse a request advanced by the spiritual head of Christianity and supported by such sacred motives, had consequently released Djem, under the charge of Grand Master d'Ambussin; who, in consideration of a cardinal's hat, had consented to deliver up his prisoner.

Thus this unfortunate youth, the object of so many conflicting interests, had made, upon the 13th of March, 1489, his public entry into Rome on horseback, clothed

in the magnificent costume of the East, between the Prior of Auvergne, nephew of the Grand Master, and Francesco Cibo, son of the Pope. From that period he had remained there, and Bajazet, faithful to promises, in the due fulfilment of which he had so much at stake, had regularly paid the annual pension of forty thousand ducats to the sovereign pontiff. Such was the state of Turkey.

Ferdinand and Isabella reigned in Spain, and had already laid the foundation of that vast empire which twenty-five years later enabled Charles V. to indulge in the proud boast that the sun never set upon his dominions. These two sovereigns had successively conquered and driven the Moors from Granada, their last retreat, whilst the genius of two men, Bartholomew Diaz and Christopher Columbus, had for their advantage recovered a world lost, and conquered a world unknown. Thus, by the result of their victories in the old and their discoveries in the new world, they had acquired at the Court of Rome an influence unknown to their predecessors. Such was the state of Spain.

In France, Charles VIII. had succeeded, on the 30th of August, 1483, to his father, Louis II., who, by means of the scaffold, had left him a kingdom enslaved, but suited to its political condition; namely, the government of a child under the regency of a woman, — a regency, however, which had restrained the pretensions of the princes of the blood royal, terminated the civil wars, and reunited to the crown what yet remained of the independent fiefs. Charles VIII. at twenty-two years of age was, if we may rely upon the testimony of La Trémouille, a prince of diminutive stature, but endowed with much greatness of soul; if we may rely upon Comines, an infant scarcely freed from the restraints of

childhood, equally destitute of intellect as of means, feeble and self-willed, and surrounded by fools rather than by good councillors; or, finally, if we may trust Guicciardini, who, as an Italian, may be suspected of partial views, an inexperienced youth, excited by an ardent thirst of dominion, the increase of power, and the desire of fame, — a desire arising much more from his fickleness and impetuosity than from his consciousness of genius, — indolent, and averse to all occupation, to which, whenever he was led to direct his attention, he betrayed almost always an equal want of judgment and discernment. It is true he was liberal, but it was a liberality exercised without stint and without discrimination. He was at times inflexibly resolute. This was obstinacy rather than firmness; and what his flatterers called goodness of heart merited much more the appellation of insensibility and infirmity of purpose. As for his body, it was in singular accordance with his imbecility and want of character. He was of low stature, his head large, neck short and thick, his breast and shoulders broad and high. His limbs were shapeless, long, and slim, and withal his features were ugly, yet capable of dignified and forcible expression; and as every limb was in disproportion, his appearance was monstrous rather than human. Such was the man whom fortune destined for a conqueror; the being for whom Heaven had reserved more glory than he could sustain. So much for the state of France.

The throne of the Empire was occupied by Frederic III., rightly called the Pacific; not only by reason of his having always maintained peace, but through the mere fact that being constantly defeated he had been invariably constrained to receive peace as the lot of the vanquished. The first proof that he had given of this

truly philosophic spirit of forbearance was during his journey to Rome, to which he proceeded to be crowned. Traversing the Apennines, he was attacked by brigands, who pillaged and escaped with their booty, unscathed and unpursued. Example is contagious; the impunity of the bandit was the encouragement of the noble; the robbers differed but in rank. Amurath seized upon a part of Hungary; Mathias Corvinus overran the lower Austrian dominions.

Frederic was unmoved, and consoled himself for their loss by repeating the maxim, "Forgetfulness is the remedy of misfortune." At the period now described, he was, after a reign of fifty-three years, about to betroth his son, Maximilian, to Mary of Burgundy, and to place his son-in-law, Albert of Bavaria, who had claimed possession of the Tyrol, under the ban of the Empire. He was, therefore, too much occupied with his family affairs to feel any solicitude about the public interests of Italy. And, moreover, he was engaged in researches for a device for the house of Austria, — an occupation of the utmost importance to a being endowed with such faculties as Frederic III. At last this device, the prophetic realisation almost of the reign of Charles V., was found, to the great joy of the old emperor, who, feeling that after this last intellectual effort of his sagacity, earth had no further claims upon his attention, died on the 19th of August, 1493, leaving the Empire to his son Maximilian. This device was the five vowels, A, E, I, O, U, which formed the initials of the following five words: —

"Austriæ est imperare orbi universo."

Such was the state of Germany.

Having now considered the political condition of the four nations gradually tending to become European

powers, let us review those secondary States which encircled Rome, the proper protectors of the spiritual Queen of the world, if it might be the ambition of any among these political giants to attack her, and for this purpose to cross the sea or the mountains, the Adriatic Gulf or the Alps, the Mediterranean or the Apennines. These States were the kingdom of Naples, the duchy of Milan, the magnificent republic of Florence, and that of Venice.

The kingdom of Naples was governed by Ferdinand, a man advanced in years, whose birth was not only illegitimate, but probably incestuous in its origin. His father, Alfonso of Aragon, held his crown from Joan of Naples, who had adopted him for her successor. But as, through fear of there being no heir to the throne, the queen upon her deathbed had appointed two instead of one, Alfonso had to maintain his rights against René. The two pretenders disputed the succession for some time. At last the house of Aragon triumphed over that of Anjou, and during 1442 Alfonso established himself upon the throne; and it was the rights of the ejected pretender, as we shall presently see, which were reclaimed by Charles VIII.

Ferdinand possessed neither the good qualities nor the genius of his father; nevertheless, he successively subdued his enemies. His two competitors were of superior merit. The one was the Count of Viana, his nephew, who, denouncing the shameless birth of his uncle, directed the party of the Aragonese; the other was Duke John of Calabria, at the head of the Anjou party. But he defeated both, and maintained himself upon his throne by his prudence, which degenerated not unfrequently into duplicity. He had a cultivated mind, possessed much scientific knowledge, and was well versed in

legislation. He was of middling stature, his head large and well formed, the forehead bold and projecting, and impressively set off by his long white hair, which fell in flowing locks upon his shoulders. With respect to his physical strength, although he had rarely exhibited it in martial exercises, it was yet so great that one day, being accidentally in the market-place at Naples, he seized by the horns a bull which had broken loose, and pinioned it to the spot in spite of the efforts of the animal to free itself from his grasp.

The election of Alexander was to Ferdinand a source of great inquietude; and, despite his prudence, he could not forbear expressing to the bearer of the news that "he not only regretted the election, but did not believe that any good Christian could rejoice at it, inasmuch as Borgia, having ever been a wicked man, would inevitably become a bad pontiff. Admitting even," he added, "that the choice were good, were it even justly satisfactory to others, it would not the less be fatal to the house of Aragon, from the very fact that he was born a subject of it, — that it had been the source of his rise and progress; for if reasons of state are able to sever the dearest ties of kindred, much more can they destroy the simpler relations of obligation and allegiance."

Ferdinand estimated the character of Alexander with his habitual tact; but as we shall see in the sequel, his opinions did not prevent his being the first to contract an alliance with him.

The duchy of Milan belonged nominally to Giovanni Galeasso, grandson of Francesco Sforza, who had invaded it the 26th of February, 1450, and had bequeathed it to Galeasso Mario, his son, father of the reigning prince. It belonged only *nominally* to him, because, in fact, the real possessor of the Milanese was at this period

not the lawful heir, but his uncle Ludovico, surnamed "Il Moro," on account of the mulberry-tree which he bore in his escutcheon. Exiled with his two brothers, Filippo, who died by poison in 1479, and Ascagno, who was raised to a cardinalship, he returned to Milan a few days after the assassination of Galeasso Mario, which took place on the 26th of December, 1476, in the basilica of St. Stephen, and seized the regency of the young duke, then only eight years of age. Since that period, although his nephew had attained the age of twenty-two, Ludovico had governed in his name, and, in all probability, would continue so to do; for a few days after the unfortunate youth had expressed a wish to exercise his rights, he fell sick, and it was openly averred that he had taken one of those slow, yet mortal poisons that the sovereigns of that day so constantly employed, — so unhesitatingly, indeed, that when even death arose from any natural malady, the cause was always sought for in its connexion with some political or personal interest. However this might be, Ludovico had consigned his nephew, too feeble to occupy himself in future with the affairs of his duchy, to the castle of Pavia, where he languished before the eyes of his wife, Isabella, daughter of the king, Ferdinand of Naples. As for Ludovico, he was ambitious, crafty, and of daring courage, unscrupulous in the use of the sword or poison, which, as occasion required, without the slightest predilection or repugnance for one or the other, he alternately employed; and, moreover, was resolutely bent upon being the successor of his nephew, whether he lived or died.

Florence, although still retaining the name of a republic, had gradually become enslaved, and belonged in fact, if not by right, to Pietro de' Medici, to whom Lorenzo, as has been related, had bequeathed it like a patrimonial

possession. Unfortunately the son had not the genius of the father. He was handsome, it is true; Lorenzo, on the contrary, was particularly plain. His voice was agreeably modulated; Lorenzo snuffled. He was well read in classical literature, his conversation was ready and refined, and he could extemporise in verse almost as fluently as he who was surnamed "the Magnificent;" but ignorant himself of politics, he was haughty and overbearing to those who had made them their pursuit, — in addition, a man ardent in the pursuit of pleasure, passionately addicted to women, incessantly occupied in such manly exercises as would best recommend him to their notice, particularly tennis, a game in which he was exceedingly expert, and now proposing, as soon as his mourning was laid aside, to dazzle not only Florence but Italy by the splendour of his court and the magnificence of his fêtes. Such at least was the resolution of Pietro, but Heaven had otherwise decided.

As regarded the republic of Venice, of which Agostino Barbarigo was the doge, she was at this period in the full ascendency of her power and splendour. From Cadiz to the Palus Mæotides every port was opened to her thousand vessels; she possessed in Italy, beyond the boundary of the lagoons, and of the ancient duchy of Venice, the provinces of Bergamo, Brescia, Cremona, Verona, Vicenza, and Padua, the Trevisano, which comprises the Feltrino, and the principality of Ravenna. She retained the Frioul except Aquileia, Istria except Trieste, upon the eastern coast of the gulf, Zara, Spoleto, and the shores of Albania; in the Ionian Sea, the islands of Zante and of Corfu; in Greece, Lepanto and Patras; and in the Morea, Moron, Ceron, Napoli de Romania, and Argos; and in the Archipelago, Candia and the kingdom of Cyprus. Thus the possessions of the repub-

lic extended from the mouth of the Po to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, and Italy and Greece formed the suburbs of Venice.

The territory left free by Naples, Milan, Florence, and Venice was the booty of petty tyrants who exercised a despotism therein; thus the Colonna were established at Ostia and at Nettuno, the Montefeltri at Urbino, the Manfredi at Faenza, the Bentivogli at Bologna, the Malatesta at Rimini, the Vitelli at Città di Castello, the Baglioni at Perugia, the Orsini at Vicovaro, and the Princes d'Este at Ferrara.

Lastly, placed at the summit of the spiral elevation of this immense circle, composed of the greater European powers, of minor States, and of petty tyrants, Rome appeared the most prominent, but the weakest of all, destitute of influence and territory, poor, unarmed, and defenceless. All this it was the object of the newly elected pontiff to remedy and to restore. Let us consider, then, the character of the man who had undertaken to accomplish such a project.

Rodrigo Lenzuoli was born at Valencia, in Spain, in 1430 or 1431, and, according to various authors, was the descendant, upon his mother's side, of a family originally of regal extraction, and who, before the tiara was the object of their ambition, had preferred claims to the crowns of Aragon and Valencia. The vivacity of his mind was remarkable in his infancy: he early evinced a great aptitude for the sciences, particularly the legislative, and was thus soon distinguished as a jurist; and by his ability in discussing and deciding the most intricate cases, he acquired an extensive reputation. He was soon weary of his civilian's honours, which he abandoned suddenly for the military profession; but after some actions sufficient to show his courage and presence of

mind, he became disgusted with this also; and as at the moment when this new feeling prevailed his father died, and left him a considerable fortune, he resolved to forsake all pursuits, and to live as the capriciousness of his fancy might dictate. It was at this period he became attached to a widow with two daughters. She died. Rodrigo became the guardian of her children; he placed one in a convent, and as the other was one of the greatest beauties of the day, he reserved her for his mistress. This was the celebrated Rosa Vanozza, by whom he had five children, Francesco, Cesare, Lucrezia, and Giofré; the name of the fifth is unknown.

Retired from public life, Rodrigo lived entirely secluded amid his family, when he heard that his uncle, who had ever loved him as a son, had been chosen Pope, under the name of Calixtus III. But love had so silenced the whispers of ambition that the exaltation of his uncle became almost the source of fearful regret lest it might recall him from his retreat. Accordingly, instead of proceeding to Rome, as another in his situation would have done, he was content with merely addressing a letter to his Holiness, entreating the continuance of his protecting kindness, and praying he might enjoy the happiness of a long and prosperous pontificate. This moderation of one of his relations, amid the grasping ambitions which met the pontiff at every step, particularly impressed Calixtus; he knew and felt the value of Rodrigo, and, pressed on all sides by the importunities of a miserable mediocrity, he more highly appreciated the capacity which so modestly withdrew. He therefore instantly replied; and his reply was an injunction to his nephew to proceed immediately to Rome.

This letter destroyed those schemes of happiness that Rodrigo had devised, and in the fulfilment of which he

might have slumbered through life as an ordinary man, had not fortune thus drawn him from so narrow a sphere. Rodrigo was happy, Rodrigo was rich; his evil passions, if not extinct, were dormant; he shrank from the contrast of the happy repose of his present mode of life with the excited, ambitious career which the future offered. He delayed his departure, in the hope that Calixtus would forget him. The hope was unfulfilled; two months afterward, a Roman prelate, the bearer of the nomination of Rodrigo to a benefice of the annual value of twenty thousand ducats, and a command to the incumbent to take immediate possession, arrived at Valencia. He could no longer delay; he obeyed, therefore; but since he was unwilling to sever himself from the source of his happiness for eight years, Rosa Vanozza departed also, and, whilst he proceeded to Rome, she journeyed to Venice, accompanied by two servants, under the care of a noble Spaniard, named Manuel Melchiori. Fortune was faithful to her promises; the Pope received him as his son, and Rodrigo was made successively Archbishop of Valencia, cardinal, deacon, and vice-chancellor. To these, Calixtus added a revenue of forty thousand ducats; and thus, at scarcely thirty-five years of age, Rodrigo was equal, both in wealth and power, to a prince.

It was with reluctance, however, that he accepted the cardinalship, which fixed his residence at Rome; he would have preferred the appointment of vicar-general of the Church, — a position which offered greater facilities of intercourse with his mistress and his family; but Calixtus pointed out the possibility of his future election to the pontificate, and from that hour the thought of being the supreme ruler of kings and nations so forcibly mastered and absorbed all the desires of his mind that the vision which his uncle had presented was ever before his

eyes. Thenceforward he displayed that intense hypocrisy which made him the most perfect incarnation of the Evil One that has ever probably existed upon earth. Rodrigo was no longer the same man; the words of humility and repentance ever trembled on his lips; with downcast look he seemed to bend beneath the remorse of his past life. Despising the wealth which he had acquired, and which, being, as he said, the property of the poor, ought to be distributed for their good, he spent his life in churches, in monasteries, or hospitals, — acquiring, even among his enemies, the reputation of a Solomon for wisdom, of a Job for patience, and of Moses for the promulgation of the Word of God. One person only could estimate the value of the pious cardinal's conversion, — that person was Rosa Vanozza.

This pious fraud was of advantage, for his protector died after a reign of three years, three months, and nineteen days, and it was the opinion of his merits that alone sustained him against the numerous enemies his rapid fortune had raised up. Thus, during the entire pontificate of Pius II. he remained in seclusion, nor did he reappear until under Sixtus IV., who gave him the abbey of Subiaco, and appointed him legate to the courts of Aragon and Portugal. Upon his return, which took place under the pontificate of Innocent VIII., he decided upon removing his family to Rome; they were, therefore, brought thither by Don Melchiori, who from that time passed as the husband of Vanozza, under the name of Count Ferdinand of Castile. The Cardinal Rodrigo welcomed the noble Spaniard as a compatriot and a friend; and he, intending to pass his life in retirement, occupied for that purpose a house in the street Della Lungara, near the church Regina Cœli, upon the banks of the Tiber. It was here, after a day passed in prayer

and works of piety, that Rodrigo came every evening to lay aside the mask of hypocrisy he had worn. Then, it was said (although of this no one can adduce proof), commenced the most infamous practices. It was rumoured that incestuous intercourse was carried on between the parents and their children, and between Lucrezia and her brothers; and these opinions were so general that to silence them, or divert their current, Rodrigo sent Cesare to study at Pisa, and married Lucrezia to a young noble of Aragon, so that Vanozza and her two sons alone remained at Rome. Such was his domestic life when Innocent VIII. died, and Rodrigo Borgia was elected in his place.

CHAPTER II.

We have seen the means employed to secure the nomination. The five cardinals, therefore, who had not participated in this act of simony, protested against its ratification; but, no matter by what means, Rodrigo had the majority; and, whether they were underhand or not, he was, nevertheless, the two hundred and sixteenth successor of St. Peter. Although he had thus gained his end, Alexander VI. did not yet venture to throw aside the mask so long worn by the Cardinal Borgia; nevertheless, upon the announcement of his election, he could not conceal his joy. With hands upraised to heaven, and with the accent of satisfied ambition, he cried: —

"Am I then Pope? Am I, indeed, the vicar of Christ, — the keystone of the arch of the Christian world?"

"Yes, holy father," replied the Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, the man who had sold the nine votes at his disposal in the conclave, "yes; and we shall trust by this election to have given glory to God, peace to the Church, and joyful satisfaction to Christianity, inasmuch as you have been chosen by the Eternal Spirit as more worthy than your brethren."

Short as was this reply, the new Pope had already regained the complete mastery of his emotions, and in a low voice, and with his hands crossed upon his breast, he said: "It is our prayer, my brethren, that God may

accord to us his merciful protection, and bless our labours, as he did those of the Apostle to whom he confided the government of the Church, — a government which, deprived of Divine assistance, we should be totally unable to undertake; but Heaven has promised its spiritual direction to him that seeks it, and we pray that it may be granted us. You, my brethren, we doubt not will manifest to us that obedience which is due to the head of the Church, imitating in this respect the submission which the flock of Christ evinced toward the chief of the apostles."

This discourse finished, Alexander clothed himself in the pontifical robes, and caused the slips of paper upon which his name was written in Latin to be thrown from the window; these, scattered by the wind, seemed to bear to the world the news of the great event, so soon to change the political destiny of Italy.

Cesare Borgia received the news of the election of his father at the University of Pisa. He had sometimes indulged in reveries of such prosperous ambition; nevertheless their fulfilment was unexpected, and his joy almost extravagant. He was then a youth of about two or three and twenty, adroit in all manly, and particularly martial exercises, riding unsaddled horses of the highest spirit, and able to sever a bull's head from his body by a single stroke of his sword. His disposition was haughty, jealous, and dissembling; according to Tommasi, he was great among the impious, as his brother Francesco was good among the great. As to his personal appearance, even contemporaneous authors have transmitted to us the most contradictory descriptions. According to some, he was an abortion of ugliness, whilst others, on the contrary, are highly laudatory of his beauty. This contradiction arises from the circum-

stance that at certain periods of the year, particularly in spring, his face was covered with blotches, which made him, for the time, an object of horror and disgust, whilst during the rest of the year he appeared a thoughtful-looking cavalier, with black flowing hair, pale complexion, and auburn beard, such as he is represented in the beautiful portrait painted of him by Raphael. Historians, chroniclers, and painters, all are agreed upon the intense expression of his eyes, describing them as emitting an incessant lustre, and investing him with the character of something infernal, or unearthly.

Such was the man whose hopes were to be so soon gratified, and who had taken for his motto, *Aut Cæsar, aut nihil*, — "Cæsar, or nothing." Upon his father's election, he instantly departed for Rome, and scarcely was he recognised at the gates when the honours paid him bore witness to his change of fortune. At the Vatican these were increased: the nobles bowed before him, as to one greater than themselves. Thus impatient, and without visiting his mother, or any other member of his family, he went immediately to the presence of the Pope, who, aware of his arrival, received him amid a brilliant and numerous assembly of the cardinals, his three brothers standing behind him. The manner of his Holiness was kind, yet unaccompanied by any marks of paternal feeling; he stooped and kissed his son's forehead, and made inquiry as to his health, and the mode of his return. Cesare replied that he was well, and entirely at the commands of his Holiness; that, as for the short fatigues and trifling inconveniences he had suffered during his return, they were more than compensated by the joy he felt in thus submissively offering his respects to one in every way so deserving of the pontificate. At these words, leaving Cesare still

kneeling, and reseating himself with dignity, the Pope, with a calm and sedate manner and expression, after an interval thus addressed him, sufficiently loud to be heard by all, and slowly, so that every word might be well considered and remembered: —

"We are well persuaded, Cesare, that you heartily rejoice to see us thus elevated, so far beyond our merits, to a height which it has pleased the Divine goodness to permit us to ascend. That joy was due to us, first as gratitude for the affection we have ever borne you, and still bear; and further on account of your own interest, since you might justly hope to receive hereafter, from our hands, the rewards that doubtless the excellence of your life will merit. But if your joy (and we address ourselves to you as we have already done to your brothers) be founded on any other supposition, you have then greatly deceived yourself, and assuredly you will find, Cesare, every expectation disappointed. We have aspired — perhaps, and we confess it with humility before you all, with an immoderate desire — to the sovereignty of the pontificate; to reach which we have followed every path that human industry could open; but we have done so with the solemn resolution that, once arrived at the point to which it led, our way thenceforward should be that only which leads toward the more spiritual worship of the Deity, and a greater veneration of the Holy See, — to the end that the memory of the good we shall do may efface the ignominious recollection of the things which we have done. And this, in such a manner that we shall be enabled, we trust, to leave to our successors a route wherein, if they trace not the steps of a saint, they may find and follow at least those of a pontiff. He who has favoured the means, now claims their result, and well disposed

are we most fully to liquidate the debt contracted; and therefore is it we tremble to awake by fraud, on our parts, the rigour of his justice.

"One hindrance could alone frustrate our designs: it would be, to feel too great an interest in your advancement. Thus have we steeled ourselves beforehand against the influence of affection, and have prayed that we may be sustained, that we falter not on your account, for the pontiff who slips in the paths of favouritism falls, and cannot fall without dishonour to the Holy See. We shall deplore to the end of our life those faults to which we owe the experience of this truth; and God grant that Calixtus, our uncle, suffer not even now in purgatory from the weight of our sins, much rather than by reason of his own. Alas! he was so richly endowed with virtue, his heart was so disposed to good; but he loved too much his kindred, and among them ourselves, so that following blindly the dictates of this feeling, he accumulated upon a few, and these the least deserving, the benefits which should have recompensed the merits of many. Indeed, he gathered unto our house those treasures which he should not have amassed to the deprivation of the poor, or which should have been more righteously employed. He dismembered the ecclesiastical States already so limited and unprotected, — the duchy of Spoleto, as well as other rich domains, — in order that we might possess them as fiefs; he trusted to our infirmities the offices of vice-chancellor and vice-prefect of Rome, the generalship of the Church, and other grave responsibilities, which, instead of being thus monopolised by us, should have been conferred on those who were far more worthy of such rewards.

"There were some, indeed, elevated to offices of dignity upon our recommendation, but whose only merit

was our too partial favour, whilst others were neglected or depressed, whose only fault was the jealousy they inspired by their worth. To despoil Ferdinand of Aragon of the kingdom of Naples, he kindled a terrible war, the prosperous result of which only tended to augment our greatness, whilst defeat would have brought only loss and dishonour to the Holy See. Finally, by permitting himself to be thus governed by those who sacrificed the public good to their private interests, he prejudiced and endangered, not alone the pontificate, but his renown, and that which was far more momentous, his immortal soul.

"Nevertheless, behold the wisdom of the judgments of God! firmly and constantly as he laboured for the establishment of our fortunes, no sooner had his death vacated the chair we occupy than we were thrown down from the height we had reached, abandoned to the rage of the people, and to the vindictive passions of those Roman nobles who resented, as a wrong to themselves, the favours he had extended to their enemies. Insomuch that, not only was it necessary to dispossess ourselves of the wealth and dignities with which our uncle had enriched us, but still more, to save our lives, and those of our friends, to condemn ourselves to a voluntary exile, — by the favour of which we were alone enabled to shelter ourselves from the storm which the envy of our greatness had excited. To us it brought the full conviction that, God frustrating the designs of men, when those designs are unjust, it is a great error for a pontiff to direct his attention to the welfare of a house which can be but of a few years' duration, rather than to the prosperity of a Church which is ordained to be eternal; that it is a foolish policy which, possessing a power neither hereditary nor transmissive, seeks to erect

dominion and greatness upon any basis but that of great virtues, dedicated to the common good. Similarly also is it with politicians, who seek to give duration to their schemes by any other means than those which restrain the unexpected whirlwinds which, rising, may raise a tempest amid a calm, — that is, create a mass of enemies, the determined action of one of whom will be more destructive to their interests than the deceitful demonstrations of a hundred friends. If you and your brothers pursue the honourable path which we now open to you, you will form no desire that will not be instantly gratified; but if, on the contrary, you hope to find our affection the handmaid of your irregular desires, you will be quickly convinced that we are the pontiff for the Church, and not for a family; and that, as the vicar of Christ, we desire to act as we shall judge to be for the good of Christianity, but not as you may consider to be for your advantage; and, this well understood, receive, Cesare, our benediction."

With these words, Alexander VI. arose, laid his hand upon his son, who was still kneeling, and then retired to his apartments, without inviting him to follow.

The youth remained stupefied by a discourse so unexpected, and which destroyed at a single blow his long-cherished expectations. Then, rising confused, and tottering like a drunken man, he left immediately the Vatican, and proceeded to his mother, of whom he had not at first thought, and to whom he returned in his distress. Vanozza united at once all the virtues and the vices of a Spanish courtesan, — devout to the Madonna to the lowest superstition; kind to her children even unto weakness; submissive to Rodrigo, even to debauchery; but, nevertheless, confident of the possession of a power which she had wielded for thirty

years, and certain, like the serpent, of being able to crush in her folds when she could not fascinate by her looks.

Vanozza knew the profound hypocrisy of her paramour, and consequently had no hesitation in reassuring the hopes of Cesare. She was right so to do. In fact, Alexander VI., declaim as he might against the abuses of family patronage, had already calculated the political advantage he could derive from the concurrence of his own family; he felt that he might entirely rely, if not upon Francesco and Giofré, at least upon Lucrezia and Cesare. She, in truth, was the counterpart of her brother. Licentious from an impure imagination, impious from natural impulse, ambitious upon calculation, Lucrezia panted after pleasure, flattery, the honours of rank, gold, jewels, rich dresses, and courtly palaces. A Spaniard under her light hair, a courtesan under her open, guileless manner, she had the features of one of Raphael's Madonnas, and the heart of Messalina; she was doubly dear to Rodrigo, who saw reflected in her his passions and his vices.

At first nothing belied the principles which Alexander had professed in his address to his son, and the first year of his pontificate surpassed the hopes which the Romans had indulged since his election. He so liberally provided for the supply of the public granaries that in the memory of man there had never been such wondrous abundance; and that this blessing might descend to the poorest, successive grants, raised upon his private fortune, enabled them to share in the general plenty, from which they had been so long excluded. He provided for the safety of the city, by establishing, a few days after his accession, a vigilant police, and a court of justice, composed of men of irreproachable reputation,

charged with the prosecution of all those nocturnal outrages so frequent under the preceding pontificate that even their number insured impunity; and the first judgments of the newly appointed officers of justice indicated a determined severity, which neither the rank nor power of the accused could mitigate. This presented so great a contrast with the preceding corruption, during which the vice-chamberlain publicly replied to those who denounced the venality of the tribunals, "God willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should live, and purchase the pardon of his offences," that the capital of the Christian world believed the pure days of the pontificate now dawned on it again.

Thus, at the expiration of a year, Alexander had regained the spiritual power his predecessors had lost. It remained, toward the full success of the first outlines of his colossal design, to re-establish also his political influence. There were two modes of effecting this, — by alliances or by conquests. He decided for the first. The noble Aragonese who had married Lucrezia, at that time merely the daughter of the Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, was neither by birth, fortune, nor genius capable of mingling with any degree of influence in the political intrigues of Alexander VI. Separation, therefore, was decreed to be divorce, and Lucrezia Borgia was free to re-marry.

The Pope opened two negotiations at the same time; he required an ally who could carefully watch the policy of the neighbouring States. Giovanni Sforza, grandson of Alexander Sforza, brother of Francesco, Duke of Milan, was lord of Pesaro, the local situation of which near the sea, between Florence and Venice, was most conveniently adapted for his purpose: he was therefore selected; and as their interests were the same,

Giovanni Sforza became soon the second husband of Lucrezia. At the same time overtures had been made to Alfonso of Aragon, to conclude a marriage between Donna Sancia, his natural daughter, and Giofré, the third son of the Pope; but as Ferdinand wished to obtain every possible advantage by this alliance, he delayed the negotiations, alleging that the children were not yet of a marriageable age, and that consequently, how great soever the honour of such an alliance, nothing at present urged its fulfilment. Thus affairs stood, to the great discontent of Alexander, who did not deceive himself as to the real cause of this evasion, but received it as it was meant — for a refusal. Alexander and Ferdinand retained then their former positions, political gamesters of equal skill, and waiting till events should declare for the one or the other. Fortune decided for Alexander.

CHAPTER III.

ITALY, although at peace, felt instinctively that it was but the calm which precedes the storm. She was too rich, too prosperous, not to be a source of envy to all other nations. The neglect and jealousy of the Florentine republic had not yet converted, indeed, the plains of Pisa into a swamp; the contests of the Colonna and the Orsini had not yet changed the rich campagna of Rome into a barren desert; the Marquis of Marignano had not yet razed to the ground one hundred and twenty villages in the republic of Sienna alone; the "Maremma" were unwholesome, but not then deadly; and Flavio Bionao, in 1450, describing Ostia, which now reckons but thirty residents, remarks that it was less flourishing than during the time of the Romans, — that is, when it comprised fifty thousand. The peasantry of Italy were at this period in the most prosperous condition: instead of living scattered and separated from one another, they inhabited well-enclosed towns, which protected their harvests and cattle; and their houses, at least such as remain, exhibit more of taste, of art, and wealth than those of our citizens at the present time; and this union of common interests, this confederacy of individuals in fortified villages, had by degrees given them an importance which neither the peasantry of France nor the serfs of Germany had ever possessed. They were armed, had a common treasury, and magistrates of their own choice; and when they fought, at least they fought for the defence of their country.

Nor was commerce less flourishing than agriculture. Manufactories of silk, wool, hemp, furs, alum, sulphur, and bitumen were everywhere seen; productions not indigenous to the soil were brought from the Black Sea, Egypt, Spain, and France, and reshipped frequently for the countries whence they had been imported, after the labour of the artist had redoubled their value; the rich contributed their merchandise, the poor their labour; the one was sure not to be deprived of industry, the other not to want occupation.

Nor had the fine arts been neglected; Dante, Giotto, Brunelleschi, Donatello were dead, but Ariosto, Raphael, Bramante, and Michael Angelo were rising. Rome, Florence, and Naples inherited the *chefs-d'œuvres* of antiquity; and the manuscripts of Æschylus, of Sophocles, and Euripides, owing to the conquest of Mahomet II., had been added to the statues of Xantippus, Phidias, and Praxiteles.

The principal sovereigns of Italy, when viewing these plains waving with the most abundant harvests, the wealthy villages, flourishing manufactories, and richly decorated churches, and then remarking the comparative barbarism of the nations which surrounded them, were well aware, however uncertain the time, that their country would yet become to other nations what America was to Spain, — a vast mine of gold to work and pillage. Consequently, from 1480, Naples, Milan, Florence, and Ferrara had signed a league offensive and defensive for mutual protection. Ludovico Sforza, from the contiguity of his possessions to France, the most interested in its maintenance, saw in the election of Alexander a fresh opportunity, not only of rendering it closer, but also of impressing upon Europe an opinion of its power and unity.

It was customary upon the election of a pontiff for the Christian States to send a solemn embassy to Rome, to renew in the name of each their vows of obedience to the Holy See. Ludovico Sforza conceived the project of assembling the ambassadors of the four powers so as to enable them to make their public entry together into Rome upon the same day, and to commission one only of their number, the envoy of the King of Naples, to address the pontiff in behalf of all. The plan was not, unhappily, in accordance with the splendid designs of Pietro de' Medici. This proud youth, who had been appointed ambassador from the Florentine republic, saw in the mission intrusted to him by his fellow-citizens an opportunity only of displaying his love of ostentation and his wealth. From the day of his appointment, his palace was thronged with tailors, jewellers, and merchants of stuffs. He had prepared the richest dresses, embroidered with precious stones taken from the acquisitions of his family. The richest jewels were stuck upon the clothes of his pages, one of whom, his favourite, wore a collar of pearls valued at one hundred thousand ducats.

On the other hand, the Bishop of Arezzo, Gentile, who had been the preceptor of Lorenzo, who was appointed the coadjutor of Pietro, and upon whom devolved the duty of offering the congratulations of the republic, had prepared his discourse and relied as much upon the charms of his eloquence to influence his hearers as Pietro upon his wealth to dazzle the spectators. Now the eloquence of the former was merely thrown away if the address were delivered by the envoy of the King of Naples, and the magnificent retinue of Pietro would be unobserved if he entered Rome amid the mixed cohort of the other ambassadors. And these two important

interests, compromised by the proposal of the Duke of Milan, revolutionised the state of Italy!

Ferdinand had already agreed to the plan suggested by Ludovico Sforza, when, influenced by Pietro, he suddenly withdrew his consent. Sforza sought the cause of this retractation, and found that the influence which had overcome his own was that of Pietro. Unable to comprehend the real motives which had prompted this opposition, he saw in it a secret league against him, and attributed it to a change of policy consequent upon the death of Lorenzo. Whatever the cause might be, it was evidently detrimental to his interests. Florence, the old ally of Milan, abandoned him for Naples. He resolved to equalise the scale, and, revealing to Alexander the policy of Pietro and Ferdinand, he proposed an alliance, offensive and defensive, to include also the republic of Venice, while at the same time the Duke of Ferrara should be summoned to decide which party he would join. Alexander, mortified by the previous conduct of Ferdinand, accepted the proposals of Ludovico; and the confederation, by which the new allies bound themselves to maintain, for the preservation of the public peace, an army of twenty thousand horse and ten thousand foot soldiers, was signed on the 22d of April, 1493.

Ferdinand watched this alliance with anxiety, but he thought to neutralise its effects by stripping Ludovico Sforza of his dominions; he therefore claimed from the Duke of Milan the resignation of the sovereign power into the hands of his nephew, with the threat otherwise of declaring him a usurper. The blow was terrible, but carried with it the risk of urging Ludovico to one of those political combinations before which he never recoiled, however dangerous they might be. This actually occurred. Sforza, disturbed in the possession of his duchy, resolved

to menace Ferdinand with the loss of his kingdom. Nothing was more easy; he knew the warlike inclinations of Charles VIII., and the pretensions of the crown of France to the throne of Naples. He despatched two ambassadors to urge the youthful monarch to claim the rights of the house of Anjou usurped by that of Aragon; and the further to engage him in so distant and hazardous an enterprise, he offered him a free and friendly passage for his troops through his territories.

Such a proposal made to Charles VIII. could not fail; a radiant horizon extended itself around as if by enchantment; what Ludovico Sforza offered him was the control of the Mediterranean, the government of Italy; and it was also through Naples and Venice that the way was opened for the conquest of Turkey or the Holy Land, according as inclination led him to revenge the disasters of Nicopolis or of Mansourah. The proposal was gladly accepted; and, through the medium of Count Charles of Belgiojoso and Count of Cajazzo for Ludovico Sforza, and of the Bishop of St. Malo and the Sénéchal de Beaucaire for Charles VIII., a secret convention was signed by which it was agreed: that the King of France should attempt the conquest of the kingdom of Naples; that the Duke of Milan should open to the King of France a passage through his estates, and should join him with five hundred lances; that the Duke of Milan should permit the King of France to arm as many vessels at Genoa as he might require; finally, that the Duke of Milan should lend to the King of France two hundred thousand ducats, payable upon his departure.

Upon his side Charles engaged: to defend the individual authority of Ludovico Sforza over the duchy of Milan against whoever should attempt to deprive him of it; to leave in Asti, a city belonging to the Duc

d'Orléans, two hundred French lances, always ready to succour the house of Sforza; lastly, to surrender to his ally the principality of Tarentum, upon the conquest of the kingdom of Naples. The treaty scarcely concluded, Charles, who overrated its results, sought instantly to free himself from every hindrance that might possibly retard or shackle his design. This was a requisite precaution, for his relations with the great European powers were far from being such as he could desire. Henry VII. had landed at Calais with a formidable army, and menaced France with another invasion. Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, if they had not contributed towards the fall of the house of Anjou, had, at least, assisted the branch of Aragon with money and soldiers. The war with the King of the Romans was excited still more by the return of Marguerite of Burgundy to Maximilian, her father, and the marriage that Charles had contracted with Anne of Brittany. By the treaty of Naples, dated the 3rd of November, 1492, Henry VII. withdrew himself from his alliance with the King of the Romans, and engaged no further to pursue his conquests.

This cost Charles VIII. seven hundred and forty-five thousand crowns of gold, and the expenses of the war in Brittany. By the treaty of Barcelona, dated the 19th of January, 1493, Ferdinand and Isabella were bound not to assist their cousin, the King of Naples, and to offer no opposition to the projects of the court of France with regard to Italy. This cost Charles VIII. Perpignan, the county of Rousillon, and La Cerdagne, which Juan of Aragon had pledged to Louis XI. for three hundred thousand ducats, and of which Louis XI. had refused the equitable redemption, so clearly did the royal old fox perceive the importance of those gates

opening upon the Pyrenees, which, in case of war, he could close from within. Finally, by the treaty of Senlis, dated the 23rd of May, 1493, Maximilian condescended to forgive France the insult he had received from its king. This cost Charles VIII. the countries of Burgundy, Artois, Charolais, and the signory of Noyers, which he had received as the dowry of Marguerite; and, moreover, the cities of Aire, Hesdin, and Bethune, which he engaged to deliver up to Philip of Austria, upon his attaining his majority.

At the expense of these sacrifices, Charles was at peace with his neighbours, and could now undertake the project suggested to him by Ludovico Sforza, who had conceived it, piqued at the refusal to concur in his plan for the deputation, — a refusal arising from the desire of Pietro de' Medici to display his costly jewels, and of Gentile to manifest his eloquence. Thus the vanity of a pedant and the pride of a scholar were about to convulse the world from the gulf of Tarentum to the Pyrenees. Alexander VI., in the centre of this extending earthquake, of which as yet Italy had not felt the shocks, had profited by the absorbing interests of the times, to falsify in the first instance the opinions he had avowed, by creating Juan Borgia, his nephew, — who had been in the preceding pontificate made Bishop of Montreal and Governor of Rome, — a cardinal.

This promotion was announced without the slightest opposition; it was *a feeler* put forth by Alexander, and its success induced him shortly after to collate Cesare Borgia to the archbishopric of Valencia, — a benefice he himself had held prior to his election to the pontificate. But here the opposition was from the side of the recipient of the gift. The impetuous youth, with all the passions and the vices of a captain of *condottieri*, felt

repugnance to assume even the mere appearance of the clerical virtues; but knowing, from his father's positive assertion, that the higher secular dignities were reserved for his eldest brother, he decided upon accepting the proffered benefit, for fear of obtaining nothing else; but his hate of Francesco was increased, for thenceforth he was doubly his rival, — in love and in the paths of ambition.

Suddenly Alexander VI. received overtures from Ferdinand; but he was too wary a politician to welcome this return without inquiring into its cause. He soon learnt the designs of the court of France against the kingdom of Naples, and all was explained. It was now his turn to dictate the terms of an alliance. He required, then, the immediate marriage of Giofré, his third son, with Donna Sancia, the natural daughter of Alfonso. He required, as her dowry, the principality of Squillace, and the county of Cariati, with a revenue of ten thousand ducats, and the rank of prothonotary, which was one of the seven chief offices of the crown, for her husband. He required for his eldest son, whom Ferdinand the Catholic had created Duke of Gandia, the principality of Tucarico, the counties of Chiaramonte, Lauria, and Carinola, with an annuity of twelve thousand ducats, and the appointment to the first of the seven great offices which might become vacant. He required that Virginio Orsini, his ambassador at the Neapolitan court, should hold the third of these offices, which was that of constable, the highest of all. Lastly, he required that Giuliano della Rovere, one of the five cardinals who had protested against his election, and who had intrenched himself at Ostia, should be forced to quit that city, which was to be placed in his possession. And all that he required was conceded.

In return, the Pope engaged only, not to withdraw from the house of Aragon the investiture of the kingdom of Naples, which had been granted to it by his predecessors. This was paying rather a high price for a simple promise; but upon this promise, if faithfully kept, depended the legitimacy of Ferdinand's power. For Naples was a fief of the Holy See; and to the Pope alone belonged the right of deciding the equitable claims of each competitor. The continuance of the investiture was of the highest importance, therefore, to the house of Aragon, at the moment when that of Anjou was rising in arms, to strip it of its possessions.

Thus a year had scarcely elapsed since his accession, and Alexander had greatly promoted the extension of his political power. He himself held, it is true, the least of the Italian States, but by the alliance of his daughter Lucrezia with the sovereign of Pesaro, and that of the Prince of Squillace with Donna Sancia, together with the territorial concessions made to the Duke of Gandia, his influence extended from Venice to the confines of Calabria.

This treaty, so advantageous for him, being once signed, as Cesare complained of being invariably neglected in the distribution of the paternal bounty, he created him cardinal of Santa Maria Novella. But as hitherto the Church could not produce an instance of a bastard assuming the purple, the Pope found four witnesses who avouched Cesare to be the son of Count Ferdinand of Castile. Don Melchiori was in fact an inestimable man; he played the character of father with as much natural ease as that of husband. The marriage of his natural children, however affiliated, was celebrated with due splendour, with the pomp of royalty

and of the Church; and as the Pope had arranged that they should reside near him, the new cardinal, Cesare Borgia, undertook the regulations both of their entry and reception at Rome, to which Lucrezia, who enjoyed an influence unexampled at the papal court, desired to add all the éclat in her power. The one, therefore, proceeded to receive the bride with a magnificent escort of cardinals and nobles, whilst the other awaited their arrival in one of the halls of the Vatican, surrounded by the noblest and most beautiful ladies of Rome. A throne was erected there for the Pope, and at his feet were placed cushions for Lucrezia and Donna Sancia; "so that," says Tommaso Tommasi, "by the appearance of the assembly, the general conversation, and manners which prevailed, one might rather have imagined himself present at the splendid and voluptuous audience of a king of Assyria rather than at the severe consistory of a Roman pontiff, who ought in every action to add brighter purity to the sacred name he bears. But," adds the same historian, "if the vigils of Pentecost were so becomingly passed, the ceremonies with which, upon the following day, they celebrated the descent of the Holy Spirit, were not less reverential, nor less in accordance with the spirit of the Church." Here follows what the master of the ceremonies has entered in his daily journal: —

"The Pope entered the Basilica of the Holy Apostles, and near him were seated, by the marble desks, where generally the canons of St. Peter chant the epistle and the gospel, Lucrezia, his daughter, and Sancia, his daughter-in-law; and around them, to the disgrace of the Church and the extreme scandal of the people, many more Roman ladies, much more worthy of inhabiting the city of Messalina than that of St. Peter."

Thus, at Rome and Naples, they slept amid the expectations of the coming storm; thus they wasted time and dissipated their treasure; and this whilst the French, alert and eager, shook on high the torches with which they were about to wrap Italy in flames. The ambitious intentions of Charles VIII. were, indeed, now no longer a matter of doubt. The young king had sent an embassy, composed of Perron de Baschi, of Briçonnet, of Aubigny, and the president of the parliament of Provence, to the different States of Italy, whose instructions were to require from the Italian princes their co-operation in recovering for the house of Anjou the rights usurped by the crown of Aragon.

Overtures were first made by them to the Venetians, whose advice and assistance they solicited on the part of the king, their master; but the Venetians, faithful to their political system, which had earned for them the nickname of the "Jews of Christianity," replied that they regretted they could not assist the young king, their troops being necessarily always under arms to guard against surprise by the Turks; and that as for advice, they were far from presuming to proffer it to a prince surrounded by experienced generals and the wisest councillors.

Perron de Baschi, unable to obtain any other reply, next addressed himself to Florence. Pietro de' Medici received him in full council, having for this purpose assembled not only the seventy, but also all the *gonfalonieri* belonging to the signory for the last thirty-four years. The ambassador requested a passage for the French troops through the States of the republic, and their requisite supplies of provisions and forage, at the expense of the king. The republic replied that if the army of Charles were directed against the Turks, instead

of against Ferdinand, they would most readily assent to his request; but, connected as they were with the house of Aragon by a formal treaty, they could not betray it by complying with this proposal. Whereupon they proceeded to Sienna. This inconsiderable republic, alarmed by the honour of the king's attention, answered that it was their fervent desire to maintain an exact neutrality, the State being too weak to declare itself beforehand for or against such rivals, obliged as it necessarily would be to follow the banners of the victor.

Provided with this reply, which at least had the merit of frankness to recommend it, the envoys set forward to Rome, and, at an audience of the Pope, demanded on behalf of their master the investiture of the kingdom of Naples. Alexander replied that, his predecessors having given this to the princes of the house of Aragon, he could not withdraw it without proof that the house of Anjou had stronger claims than he whom they sought to dispossess; further, he reminded Perron de Baschi that, Naples being a fief of the Holy See, to the Pope alone belonged the right of appointing the sovereign, and that consequently to attack the present possessor of the throne was to war with the Church.

The result of the embassy was not very promising to Charles; he resolved, therefore, to rely for aid only upon his ally, Ludovico Sforza, and to refer all other points to the decision of the sword. The news which reached him about the same time still further confirmed his resolution: it was the death of Ferdinand. On returning from the chase, the aged monarch was attacked by a catarrhal cough, from the effects of which he died on the 25th of January, 1494, at the age of seventy, after

a reign of thirty-six years, leaving his throne to his eldest son, Alfonso, who was immediately proclaimed his successor.

The new king was not a novice in war, — had already "earned his spurs;" he had fought, and successfully, against the Florentines and Venetians, and had driven the Turks from Otranto; he passed, moreover, for a man as subtle as his father in the tortuous policy then so much prized and employed by the several courts of Italy; nor did he despair of being enabled to enrol, even among his allies, Bajazet II., with whom he was then at war. When he was made acquainted with the designs of Charles, he despatched, therefore, Camillo Pandone to Bajazet to awaken his attention to the fact that the Italian expedition was but a mere pretext of the King of France to advance nearer the Mahometan conquests; and that, once upon the Adriatic, Charles could transport in two days his army to Macedonia, and, by land, thence march upon Constantinople. He required, therefore, from the emperor, in defence of their common interests, six thousand horse and as many foot-soldiers, to be maintained at his cost during their service in Italy. Pandone was to have been joined at Tarentum by Giorgio Bucciarda, commissioned by the Pope to solicit also in his name the aid of the Turks against the Christians. But whilst awaiting the reply of Bajazet, which might be for some months delayed, Alfonso proposed a meeting between the Pope, Pietro de' Medici, and himself, to deliberate upon points of urgency. This meeting was fixed at Vico-varo, near Tivoli, where the several members of it met upon the day appointed. Alfonso, who, upon his departure from Naples, had already arranged his plan of naval operations, and given to his brother Frederic the command of

a fleet of thirty-five galleys, eighteen large and twelve smaller vessels-of-war, with which to watch the fleet which Charles was arming in the port of Genoa, was now more particularly bent upon concerting with his allies the opening of the campaign by land. He had at his immediate disposal, and without reckoning the contingent his allies were engaged to furnish, one hundred squadrons of heavy cavalry and three thousand cross-bowmen and light-horse. He proposed, therefore, to advance immediately upon Lombardy to effect a revolution in favour of Galeasso and to drive Ludovico Sforza from Milan before the French army should arrive; so that at the instant he descended the Alps Charles should find an enemy it would be requisite to combat, instead of an ally who had promised a free passage through his dominions, together with troops and money.

This was a proposal at once of a great politician and of a daring commander; but as each was intent on his private interests, and not on the public good, this advice was coldly received by Pietro, who saw in it no greater part allotted him to play in war than had been proposed in the embassy; and was directly opposed by Alexander, who calculated upon the employment of the troops of Alfonso for his own advantage. He reminded, therefore, the King of Naples that one of the promised conditions of the investiture was the expulsion of the Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere from the city of Ostia, and the cession of that city to him, according to the articles of the treaty. Moreover, the favours conferred upon Virginio Orsini, consequent upon his embassy to Naples, had raised against him the enmity of Prospero Colonna and his brother, to whom belonged all the villages lying around Rome.

Now the Pope could not be left exposed to such

powerful enemies, and the most pressing point was, therefore, his deliverance; it being most important that he should be in safety, inasmuch as the Holy See was the life and soul of a league of which the others were but the trunk and members. Although Alfonso very readily detected the flimsy motives which influenced Pietro de' Medici, whilst Alexander had scarcely rendered it requisite for him to inquire for a moment as to his, he was yet obliged to yield to the decision of his allies, leaving to the one the defence of the Apennines, and aiding the other in ridding himself of his Romagnese neighbours. He pressed, therefore, the siege of Ostia, and gave to Virginio, who then commanded two hundred men-at-arms of the Pope's, a squadron of his light-horse, with orders to encamp about Rome and keep the Colonna in check. The remainder of his troops he divided into two divisions, the one under the command of his son Ferdinand, with which to scour the Romagna and compel the several petty princes to furnish their promised contingents, whilst he himself with the other defended the passes of the Abruzzi.

On the 23rd of April Alexander was relieved from the first and the most dangerous of his enemies. Giuliano della Rovere, seeing the impossibility of withstanding the troops of Alfonso, embarked on board a brigantine which was to convey him to Savona. As for Virginio Orsini, he commenced from that day the celebrated partisan war which has converted the campagna of Rome into the most poetic desert of the earth.

In the mean time Charles VIII. was at Lyons, not only uncertain as to the route he should take, but beginning even to reflect upon the hazard of the expedition. Ludovico Sforza excepted, he had met with no support,

so that it was not improbable that he would find not only the kingdom of Naples, but Italy, against him. He had expended almost all the funds at his disposal in the mere preparations for war; the Lady of Beaujeu and the Duc de Bourbon condemned strenuously the enterprise; Briçonnet, its adviser, shrunk from its defence; finally, more irresolute than ever, Charles had already countermanded the advance of some portion of his troops, when the Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, expelled from Italy by the Pope, arrived at Lyons, and sought an audience of the king. He hastened to his presence, urged at once by hate and the hope of revenge, and found Charles prepared to abandon his designs. He related to him the division which prevailed amongst his enemies, and its cause; he showed him how each was governed by self-interest; Pietro de' Medici following the dictates of his pride, Alexander seeking only the political advancement of his house. He pointed out that his fleets already occupied the ports of Villa Franca, Marseilles, and Genoa, of which the equipments would be lost; he reminded him that he had already sent Pierre d'Urfe, his master of the horse, to prepare a splendid residence for him in the palaces of the Spinolas and the Dorias. Lastly, he depicted the ridicule, the disgrace, which would inevitably accrue, if he abandoned an enterprise so loudly vaunted, and for the execution of which he had been compelled to sign treaties so onerous in their conditions as those with Henry VII., Maximilian, and Ferdinand the Catholic.

Giuliano della Rovere had aimed well; he struck the pride of the young king, who no longer hesitated. He ordered his cousin, the Duc d'Orléans, to take the command of the fleet, and repair immediately to Genoa, and

he despatched a courier to Antoine de Bassey, Baron of Tricastel, with directions to lead to Asti the two thousand foot soldiers whom he had raised in the Swiss cantons. Lastly, he himself advanced from Vienne in Dauphiny on the 23rd of August, crossed the Alps at Mont Genèvre without the slightest opposition, and descended into Piedmont and the Montferrat, which were then governed by two regents, the Princes Charles Jean Aimé and Guillaume Jean, the sovereigns of these two principal cities being, the one six, the other eight years of age. They advanced to meet Charles, each at the head of a numerous and brilliant court, and both shining with jewels and precious stones. Charles, aware that, notwithstanding their friendly indications, they had, nevertheless, signed a treaty with his enemy, received them with the greatest courtesy; and, as they were profuse in their professions of amity, he suddenly required of them a proof; it was to lend him the diamonds they then wore. The two regents could but obey a request which possessed all the characteristics of a command. They took off their collars, rings, and earrings, for which Charles gave them a detailed receipt; he then pledged them for 24,000 ducats. Provided with this money, he advanced towards Asti, of which the Duc d'Orléans had retained the sovereignty, and where he was joined by Ludovico Sforza and his father-in-law, the Duke of Ferrara. They brought with them not only the troops and money agreed upon, but a court also, composed of the handsomest ladies of Italy. Balls, festivals, and tourneys then commenced, with a magnificence which surpassed anything previously witnessed in Italy.

But these were suddenly interrupted by the illness of the king. This was the first indication in Italy of that

infection, brought by Columbus from the new world, called by the Italians the French, by the French the Italian, disease. The greater probability is that a part of the crew of Columbus, then at Genoa, or in its environs, had already introduced from America that strange and cruel equivalent for its mines of gold. Restored to health at the expiration of a few weeks, Charles advanced to Pavia, whither, in a dying state, proceeded also the young Duke Juan Galeasso. The King of France and he were cousins-german, sons of two sisters of the house of Savoy. He accordingly could not avoid an interview, and went, therefore, to the castle in which he resided far more as a prisoner than as its lord. He found Charles half recumbent upon a couch, pale and exhausted by voluptuous habits, according to some; a victim of a slow and mortal poison, according to others. But how great soever his desire to obtain redress, the poor youth dared not address the king, for his uncle Ludovico Sforza did not for one instant quit his presence. But at the moment when Charles arose to depart, a door opened and a graceful woman in the bloom of youth appeared, who threw herself at his feet; it was the wife of the unfortunate Juan Galeasso, who earnestly supplicated him to abandon his designs against Alfonso and his brother Ferdinand. Upon this the brow of Sforza became contracted, gloomy, and menacing, as of one uncertain what impression this might produce on his ally; but he was soon reassured. Charles replied that it was now too late to retract, that it concerned the glory of his name and the interest of his kingdom, — motives too important to be sacrificed to any feeling of pity, however earnest and sincere. The unhappy wife, whose last hope rested on this attempt, rose, and threw herself sobbing into the arms of her

husband; Charles VIII. and Ludovico Sforza departed. The fate of Juan Galeasso was sealed.

The third day after this occurrence, Charles advanced toward Florence, accompanied by his ally, but they had hardly reached Parma before a messenger arrived, and announced to Ludovico Sforza the death of his nephew. Ludovico expressed his regret that he must now leave the king to continue his journey alone, but the events which recalled him to Milan were of such import, he said, that his presence under the circumstances could not longer be delayed. It was true; he went to inherit the succession of the man he had murdered. Charles nevertheless continued his march, though not without inquietude. The sight of the dying prince had deeply affected him; he was strongly impressed with the conviction that Ludovico had caused his death, and he felt that an assassin could become a traitor. His way lay through a country with which he was unacquainted; before him an avowed enemy, upon his rear a doubtful friend; they were entering the mountainous defiles; where, as the army was not regularly provisioned, but subsisted on the day's supply, the slightest check might cause a famine. Before them was Fivizzano, — merely a small fortified town, it is true, but behind them rose the fortresses of Sarzana and Pietra Santa, which were considered impregnable; and in addition they were traversing a country at all times unwholesome, more particularly so in October, the only product of which was oil, obtaining its corn even from the neighbouring districts; thus the entire army might be in a few days destroyed by malaria and want, even more readily than by the facilities of attack which every step of ground offered to an opponent.

The situation was perilous; but the pride of Pietro

de' Medici again freed Charles from his embarrassments. Pietro had engaged, as has been stated, to defend Tuscany against the French; but, relying less confidently upon his own troops, as he witnessed their descent of the Alps, he demanded succours from the Pope. The rumour, however, of this ultramontane invasion had been scarcely bruited about Romagna, when the Colonnas raised their standard in the name of the King of France, and, collecting all their forces, made themselves masters of Ostia, where they awaited the French fleet in order to offer him a passage toward Rome. Thus the Pope, instead of despatching troops to Florence, was obliged to recall his forces around his capital; he therefore merely promised Pietro that, if Bajazet sent him the troops he had solicited, he would immediately place them at his disposal. Pietro de' Medici was still irresolute and undecided, when he learnt that the Marquis of Tordinovo had betrayed to the French the unprotected side of Fivizzano, so that the French had carried it by storm, and had put the garrison and inhabitants to the sword; whilst about the same time Gilbert de Montpensier, who watched the coast, to keep open the communications between the army and the fleet, had encountered a detachment sent by Paul Orsini to reinforce the garrison at Sarzana, and had cut it to pieces. Quarter had been resolutely refused; and all the fugitives they could overtake were massacred.

This was the first time that the Italians, accustomed to the chivalrous combats of the fifteenth century, had met the fierce ultramontanes, who, less civilised than themselves, considered war not as a game of skill, but as the shock of mortal strife. The news, therefore, of these two butcheries caused a great sensation at Florence: every citizen depicted to himself the French army as

similar to those hordes of ancient barbarians who extinguished fire with blood; and the prophecies of Savonarola, who had predicted this invasion, and the terrible consequences which would ensue, being now recited, so great an excitement prevailed that Pietro, resolved to obtain peace at all hazards, procured a decree of the republic that ambassadors should be sent to the conqueror, — with the secret determination of joining them, and of submitting himself entirely to the will of the king. He consequently quitted Florence with four more deputies, and on reaching Pietra Santa, he demanded of Charles a safe conduct for himself. The following day Briçonnet and De Piennes arrived there, and brought him before Charles.

Notwithstanding his name and influence, in the eyes of the French nobility, who considered it a dishonour to be engaged in any lucrative pursuit, Pietro de' Medici was but a wealthy merchant, with whom it was needless to be on much ceremony. Charles received him, therefore, on horseback, and demanded in the haughty tone of a master to his inferior, from whom and whence he derived the arrogance that had encouraged him to dare to dispute his advance into Tuscany. Pietro de' Medici replied that, with the full consent of Louis XI., his father, Lorenzo, had concluded a treaty of alliance with Ferdinand of Naples, that he therefore had been compelled to adhere to pre-existing engagements; but, unwilling to carry this devotion to the house of Aragon to excess, in opposition to that of France, he was prepared to accept whatever terms the king might dictate. Unprepared for so much humility from his enemy, the king demanded the cession of Sarzana, with which Pietro immediately complied. The conqueror then, as if anxious to ascertain the limits

of this deferential submission of the ambassador of the high and mighty republic, replied that this concession was far from sufficient; that in addition he must possess Pietra Santa, Pisa, Librafetta, and Leghorn. Pietro consented with equal facility to this also, upon one single guarantee, — the promise of Charles that these cities should be restored to the republic when he had completed the conquest of the kingdom of Naples. Lastly, Charles, perceiving that the ambassador who had been deputed to him was so ductile and submissive, exacted as a final condition, but also as the *sine quâ non* of his royal protection, that the republic should lend him a sum of two hundred thousand florins.

Pietro, who disposed of the treasure of the republic with as much ease as of its fortresses, replied that his fellow-citizens would be proud to be enabled thus to assist their new ally. Charles thereupon desired him to mount his horse, and directed him to go before and commence the fulfilment of his engagements by the cession of the fortresses he had named. Pietro obeyed; and the French army, conducted by the grandson of Cosmo the Great and the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, continued its triumphal march across the plains of Tuscany. Arriving at Lucca, Pietro learnt that the concessions he had made to the king had occasioned the greatest excitement at Florence. The republic had limited the probable demands of Charles to a free passage through its territory; the discontent was therefore general upon the news of the conduct of Pietro, and this was increased upon the arrival of the ambassadors, whom he had not even condescended to consult in the negotiations. For himself, thinking his return requisite, he demanded of Charles permission to precede his arrival. As he had fulfilled all his engagements, except

the loan, and as the terms of this could be negotiated only in Florence, the king consented, and the same evening Pietro re-entered his palace in the Via Larga.

On the following morning he was anxious to meet the senate, but, on arriving at the Piazza Del Vecchio Palazzo, the *gonfalonier*, Jacopo de Nerli, advanced to meet him, and pointed to Lucas Corsini standing at its gates, with his sword drawn, and having behind him the city guards, prepared, if requisite, to prevent his entrance. Pietro was astonished at this unexpected opposition, but did not even attempt its repression. He returned home, and wrote to Paolo Orsini, his brother-in-law, to join him with his soldiers. Unfortunately for him, this letter was intercepted, and the senate saw in it an attempt at rebellion. They called upon the citizens for aid; these, hastily armed, rushed in crowds, and assembled before the square of the palace.

In the mean time the Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici had mounted on horseback, and, believing that Orsini was prepared to support him, he traversed the streets, accompanied by his retainers, shouting his war-cry, "Palle! palle!" But it was in vain; the cry was not re-echoed, and when the cardinal reached the street De Calzaioli, it was received with such murmurs that he saw at once that, instead of endeavouring to excite Florence in his behalf, his most politic course would be to quit the city before the excitement was at its height. He retreated, therefore, immediately to his palace, expecting to meet there his brothers Pietro and Julian; but they, protected by Orsini, had already left Florence by the gate of San Gallo. The danger was extreme; Giovanni de' Medici sought to follow their example, but wherever he appeared the clamours of the citizens became each moment more menacing. At last, perceiv-

ing that the danger increased at every step, he dismounted, and took refuge in a house the door of which was open. It communicated, fortunately, with a convent of Franciscans, one of the brothers of which lent his robe to the fugitive, and, protected by this humble disguise, he escaped, and rejoined his brothers on the Apennines.

On the same day the republic proclaimed the Medici to be traitors and rebels, and sent another embassy to the King of France. They found him at Pisa, where he restored the freedom of the city, which for eighty-seven years had been under the dominion of Florence. Charles VIII. gave no reply to the messengers of the republic, but merely signified his intention to advance immediately to Florence. Such a reply, as may be supposed, occasioned extreme alarm. Florence had no forces ready for its defence, nor time to raise them; nevertheless, every powerful family assembled its servants and vassals, and having armed them, awaited the arrival of the French, resolved not to commence hostilities, but determined to defend themselves to the uttermost, if attacked.

It was agreed that if necessity exacted a general levy, the tolling of the bells from the various churches should be the signal. The palaces which remain of that period are still in every respect so many fortresses, and the incessant contests of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines had familiarised the Tuscans with street warfare. On the 17th of November the king arrived at the gate of San Friano; he found there the nobility of Florence, magnificently dressed, accompanied by the clergy, singing hymns, and surrounded by the populace, who, pleased at the prospect of all change, hoped to obtain also some concessions of their former freedom by the

downfall of the Medici. Charles stopped for a few minutes beneath a gilt canopy they had erected for him; then replying in an evasive manner to some expressions of welcome the senate had addressed to him, he called for his lance, which he brought to its rest upon his thigh, and gave orders to enter the city; and, traversing this in its entire extent with his army, he dismounted finally at the palace of the Medici, which had been prepared for his reception.

The negotiations commenced on the following morning, but with little chance of agreement on either side. The Florentines had received Charles as a guest; he, on the contrary, had entered their city as a conqueror. Thus, when the deputies of the senate spoke of ratifying the treaty of Pietro de' Medici, the king replied that it was annulled, since they had expelled the person by whom it had been drawn up; that Florence was his conquest, as he had shown by entering it, lance in hand; that he reserved for himself its sovereignty, and should decide according to his good pleasure upon the point; that consequently he would communicate to them whether he should delegate his authority to the senate, or re-establish the Medici; and that, as regarded other points, he would acquaint them with his ultimatum upon the morrow.

This answer excited the greatest consternation; nevertheless it only the more confirmed the Florentines in their resolutions of defence. Charles VIII. had been also struck by the extraordinary population of the city, for not only were the streets through which he rode almost impassable for the crowd, but every house, from its terraces to the smallest outlets of its cellars, seemed to swarm with inhabitants. In fact, Florence, owing to the increase of its population, numbered nearly one hundred and fifty thousand souls.

On the morrow the deputies obtained audience of the king, and the discussions recommenced; but, as there seemed to be no chance of agreement, the king's secretary, standing at the foot of the throne, where Charles was seated, produced a paper, and began reading, article by article, the conditions granted by Charles to the republic; but one third of this was scarcely read before the debates became still more violent; and Charles having threatened that unless these terms were ratified he would sound the trumpets and assemble his troops, Pietro Capponi, the secretary of the republic, and who was called the Scipio of Florence, snatched from the hands of the king's secretary the shameful capitulation he proposed, and tearing it in pieces, exclaimed, "Be it so then, sire! Sound your trumpets; we will ring our bells!" Then, throwing the fragments of the capitulation in the face of the astonished secretary, he rushed from the chamber to give the fearful order that was to change the fair city of Florence into a field of battle.

Contrary to all expectation, this bold conduct saved the city. The French thought that the utterance of so bold a threat was not mere gasconade, but that the Florentines possessed secret resources upon which they could rely; and as some of the more influential counsellors of Charles advised him to abate his proposals, Charles consented to offer more reasonable terms, which were accepted and proclaimed on the 26th of November, in the cathedral of Santa Maria de' Fiori. The terms were these: that the senate should pay to Charles VIII., as a subsidy, the sum of one hundred and twenty thousand florins, in three sums; should rescind the sequestration placed upon the property of the Medici, and revoke the decree which placed a price upon their heads;

should publish an amnesty for all political offences as regarded Pisa, on account of which the Pisans should renew their allegiance to Florence; and, lastly, should admit the claims of the Duke of Milan upon Sarzana and Pietra Santa, but that these should be referred to future arbitration. In consideration of which, the king engaged to restore the other fortresses of which he was in possession, either upon the capture of Naples or upon the conclusion of the war, by peace, or truce for two years, or upon his quitting Italy for any reason he might assign.

Two days after the announcement of this treaty, Charles, to the great joy of the senate, quitted Florence, and advanced toward Rome by way of Poggibondi and Sienna. The Pope now shared in the general consternation; he was aware of the massacres of Fivizzano, of Lunigiano, and of Imola, that Pietro de' Medici had surrendered the fortresses of Tuscany, that Florence had capitulated, and Catherine Sforza had negotiated with the conqueror; he daily saw the dispirited Neapolitan soldiers passing through Rome to fall back upon the Abruzzi, so that whilst thus unprotected, the French army advanced toward him, master of the entire extent of the Romagna, and stretching in one line from Piombino to Ancona.

It was about this time that Alexander received the reply of Bajazet, delayed in consequence of the ambassadors having been detained by Giovanni della Rovere, brother of the Cardinal Giuliano, upon their landing at Sinigaglia. They were bearers of a verbal answer to his Holiness: that the emperor being then at war with the King of Hungary, the Sultan of Egypt, and the Greeks of Macedon and Epirus, could not, in spite of his sincere desire, then aid him with his army. They

were accompanied also by a favorite of the sultan, the bearer of a private letter, in which upon certain conditions Bajazet offered to aid Alexander VI. by a subsidy. The despatch was to the following effect: After the recital of the titles of Bajazet, and the customary felicitations to the Pope: —

"Your envoy Bucciarda having stated to us that the King of France, who is now at war with your Holiness, has expressed a wish that our brother Djem, now in your charge, should be transferred to his protection, we think it due to you to state that, not only is this in direct opposition to our will, but that it would be followed by events equally prejudicial to your Holiness and to Christianity. Reflecting therefore upon this circumstance in conjunction with your envoy, we are of opinion that it would be well for the repose, the interests, and the honour even of the Holy See, and at the same time for our personal satisfaction, that our brother Djem, who as a man is subject to death, should be put to death with the least unnecessary delay; seeing that, situated as he is, this would be happiness to him, most serviceable to your Holiness, favourable to the preservation of peace, and highly satisfactory to me, your friend. And if, as we trust, this proposal should be welcomed by your Holiness, it would be better in such case that it should be hastened rather than delayed; and that, by the surest means it may please your Holiness to employ, our brother Djem should be freed from the pains of this world, and enter into the tranquil joys of another in which he will find repose. And should your Holiness adopt this plan, and deliver to us the body of our brother, we, the Sultan Bajazet, engage on our part to remit to whatever place, and to whomsoever you may appoint, the sum of three hundred thousand ducats, which we further engage to place in the hands of a third party, to the intent that your Holiness may be assured of their receipt on the day appointed consequent upon the delivery of the body of our brother. Moreover, I promise, for the more complete satisfaction of your Holiness, that so

long as you shall occupy the throne of the pontiff, neither by me, my compatriots, or retainers, shall any injury be offered or done unto the Christians, whatever their condition, upon land or sea; and to the end that no doubt may arise as to the full and entire accomplishment of the stipulations here made, I have sworn, and attested in the presence of your envoy Bucciarda, upon the gospels of the true God whom we adore, that item by item they shall be observed, from the first even unto the last; and now, at this present, for your more complete security, that no doubt may linger upon your mind, I, the undersigned Sultan Bajazet, swear by the one true God, who created the heaven and the earth, and all that therein is, to observe religiously the engagement here made, and neither to conceive nor undertake aught in future against the welfare or interest of your Holiness.

"Written at Constantinople, in our palace, the 12th of September, 1494."

His Holiness read this missive with the greatest satisfaction. The aid of four or five thousand Turks had become ineffectual in the existing state of affairs, and would only tend the more to compromise the spiritual head of the Christian world; but three hundred thousand ducats was a sum highly advantageous to receive under any circumstances whatever. It is true that during the life of Djem Alexander enjoyed an annuity of sixty thousand, representing a capital of about six hundred thousand; but the want of ready money made him willing to submit to a sacrifice.

Nevertheless, Alexander postponed the acceptance of the terms, and resolved to be guided by the course of events. The most urgent point for his decision was the policy he should pursue with regard to the King of France. His success was unexpected; and Alexander, as we have seen, had based the future greatness of his family upon his alliance with the house of Aragon.

But the throne of Aragon was tottering, and a volcano more terrible than Vesuvius threatened to destroy Naples. It was necessary, therefore, to abandon his former plans, and to combine his interests with those of the King of France, — a matter not easily accomplished, for Charles still highly resented the investiture he had granted the house of Aragon. He therefore sent the Cardinal Francis Piccolomini to the king.

This selection of the envoy seemed at the first glance impolitic, inasmuch as the cardinal was the nephew of Pope Pius II., who had strenuously opposed the house of Anjou; but Alexander was influenced by motives which those around him could not fathom. He foresaw that Charles would not readily grant an audience to the cardinal, and that in the conferences which must thereupon ensue, he must of necessity be brought much in contact with those who chiefly influenced the king. Now, apart from his ostensible mission to Charles, Piccolomini had secret instructions for his principal ministers. These were Briçonnet and Philippe de Luxembourg, to whom the envoy was empowered to promise the cardinal's hat. It occurred as Alexander had foreseen; the envoy, refused an audience, was obliged to confer with the councillors. This was precisely what the Pope desired. Piccolomini returned to Rome with the refusal of the king, but with the promise of Briçonnet and Philippe de Luxembourg, to exert all their influence in the Pope's behalf, and to induce the king to receive another envoy.

In the mean time, the French continued to advance, never remaining more than forty-eight hours in any city; so that it became hourly more urgent to enter into arrangements with Charles. The king had entered Sienna and Viterbo without resistance. Yves d'Alègre

and Louis de Ligney had obtained possession of Ostia from the Colonnas; Civita Vecchia and Corneto had opened their gates; the Orsini had submitted; and Giovanni Sforza had retired also from the Aragonese alliance. Alexander considered it was now time to abandon his ally, and sent therefore the bishops of Concordia, of Terni, and his confessor, to the king. They were empowered to renew the promise made to Briçonnet, and to Louis de Luxembourg, and had full powers to negotiate in their master's name, whether Charles wished to include Alfonso in the treaty, or was bent on signing no engagement but with the Pope. They found Charles fluctuating between the insinuations of Giuliano della Rovere, who, as witness of the simony of the Pope, urged the assembly of a council to effect his deposition, and the secret support and protection of the bishops of Mans and of St. Malo; so that the king, decided upon making himself acquainted with the facts without prejudging the case, continued his route, and dismissed the ambassadors, in company with the Maréchal de Gie, the Sénéchal de Beaucaire, and Jean de Gannay, first president of the parliament of Paris, who were charged to acquaint the pontiff that the king was above all things anxious to enter Rome without resistance; that on condition of this voluntary, frank, and loyal admission, he would respect the authority of his Holiness, and the privileges of the Church; that the king desired that Djem should be delivered up to him, in order that he might be made available against the sultan when he should carry the war into either Macedonia, Turkey, or the Holy Land; that, as for the other conditions, they were unimportant and might be arranged at the first conference. The ambassadors added that the French army was only two days'

march from Rome, at the expiration of which time the king would probably himself arrive to receive the answer of the Pope.

Negotiations were of no avail with a prince of such resolute activity. Alexander therefore intimated to Ferdinand that, for his own safety, it was desirable that he should instantly quit Rome. To this, however, he would not listen, and declared that he would leave it by one gate only when Charles should enter by another. But his departure was not long delayed. Two days afterwards, about eleven in the morning, a sentinel placed on the watch upon the castle of St. Angelo exclaimed that he saw the vanguard of the French army slowly emerging from the horizon. Alexander and the Duke of Calabria immediately ascended the terrace which commands the fortress, and ascertained the truth of the alarm. Then only did the Duke of Calabria depart, leaving Rome by the gate of San Sebastiano at the instant when the vanguard of the French halted within five hundred paces from the gate Del Popolo. It was the 31st of December, 1494.

At three in the afternoon, being joined by the main body, the advanced guard of the army resumed its march, with drums beating and colours flying, consisting, according to Paulus Jovius (lib. ii., p. 41 of his history), of the Swiss and Germans, clothed in short tight surcoats of various colours, armed with the old Roman double-edged sword, and carrying ashen lances ten feet in length, the heads of which were narrow and sharp-pointed. A fourth part only of these bore, instead of lances, halberds in the form of a hatchet, fitted either to cut or thrust. The first ranks of each battalion wore helmets and cuirasses, which defended the head and chest, so that when in battle the soldiers

presented to the enemy a triple row of lances, which rose and fell as the quills of a porcupine. To every thousand soldiers a company of one hundred fusileers was attached, and the commanders wore lofty plumes in their helmets, to distinguish them from the privates. Following these came the crossbowmen of Gascony, whose plain uniform was strongly contrasted with that of the Swiss, to whom also they seemed comparatively diminutive; these were five thousand strong, excellent soldiers, active and courageous, and highly valued for their rapidity and skill in the use of the crossbow.

The cavalry next advanced, the *élite* of the French nobility, with their glittering helmets and collars, and surcoats of velvet and of silk; their swords each bearing a name; their shields each representing a noble house; and their colours each emblematic of some chivalrous lady-love. Besides his defensive weapons, every cavalier carried a mace at his saddlebow, either plated on all sides or covered with spikes. Their horses were large and powerful, and, according to the prevalent custom, had their ears and tails docked; but, unlike those of the Italians, they had not leathern defensive armour, and were therefore more exposed in the charge. Every cavalier was attended by a page and two esquires, who fought always on the right hand and left hand of their liege lord. Thus they formed not only the most splendid, but the most numerous body of soldiers in the army, amounting, with their attendants, to ten thousand men. Five thousand light-horse succeeded, armed with bows, and, like the English archers, discharging their long arrows at a distance. They were the most useful auxiliaries in battle; for they could be brought rapidly to any quarter of the field, from one wing to another, to the van or rear, pour in their flight of arrows, and,

their quivers being exhausted, retire at full gallop, exposed to no danger of pursuit from the infantry or heavy horse. The defensive armour was the helmet and hauberk; some in addition carried a javelin, to transfix an opponent if unhorsed; all wore long cloaks, ornamented with aiguillettes and the armorial bearings of their leaders, emblazoned on plates of silver.

The king's body-guard closed the long array: it consisted of four hundred archers, of whom one hundred were Scotch; whilst two hundred of the most illustrious knights, bearing heavy maces upon their shoulders, marched on foot by his side. Charles, in rich armour, and his horse splendidly accoutred, advanced amid this cohort, accompanied on his right and left by the cardinals Ascanio Sforza, brother of the Duke of Milan, and Giuliano della Rovere, who was subsequently Pope Julius II. The cardinals Colonna and Savelli were next seen, and behind them Prospero and Fabrizio Colonna, and the several petty princes and Italian generals who had sided with the king.

The crowd which had assembled to witness the march of these troops, fearful alike to them from their numbers and strange armour, had remarked also, and with great anxiety, a heavy sound, every moment increasing, and advancing like a rolling peal of thunder; soon the earth seemed to tremble, the windows shook in their casements, and, as the escort of the king defiled, thirty-six brass cannons, each drawn by six horses, were seen closing the rear. These were eight feet in length, their bores large enough to admit a man's head, and the weight of each was estimated at about six thousand pounds. The culverins and falconets, the former sixteen feet in length, the latter adapted for balls of the size of a grenade, followed, forming an artillery entirely

unknown to the Italians, and the effect of which was increased at once by their astonishment and fears.

Six hours had elapsed from the time of the entrance of the advanced guard into Rome, and night closed in ere the artillery had passed; and as one of the six artillerymen attached to each gun bore a torch, the lurid, uncertain light gave to the objects on which it fell an appearance far more gloomy and threatening than they would have presented by day. The young king alighted at the Venetian palace; the artillery was arranged and pointed upon the square and streets adjacent, and the rest of the army was quartered in the different districts of the city. The same evening, far more as a token of respect than to ease his mind of any fears as to his personal safety, the keys of Rome and those of the gates of the garden of the Belvedere were presented to the king. And the same ceremony, it may be observed, had taken place with the Duke of Calabria. The Pope, as before stated, had retired to the castle of San Angelo with a retinue only of six cardinals; so that on the following morning the young king found himself surrounded by a court very different, both in numbers and appearance, from that of the spiritual head of the Church.

The question as to the propriety of summoning a council, which, convicting Alexander of simony, should next proceed to his deposition, was again taken into consideration. But the councillors of the king, bribed, as we have seen, by the promises of the Pope, observed that the period was exceedingly inopportune for this discussion, as it would tend to excite a new schism in the church at the very moment when they were preparing to march against the infidels. As this coincided with the king's opinion, there was not much difficulty

in convincing him of its propriety, and it was finally agreed to enter into negotiations with his Holiness. Scarcely, however, were these commenced when they were suspended; for the first stipulation on the part of Charles was the surrender of the castle of San Angelo. On the other hand, the Pope, considering retention of this castle to be his sole security, was determined to reject the stipulation.

Thrice in his impetuosity the king was resolved to obtain by force what was refused to his demand, and levelled the artillery at the gates of the castle of San Angelo; but the Pope was unmoved by any such demonstration, and, obstinate as he was, this time the King of France gave way. That article was, therefore, abandoned, and they agreed upon the following terms: that between his Majesty the King of France and his Holiness the Pope, a sincere friendship and firm alliance should thenceforth exist; that, until the definitive conquest of the kingdom of Naples, the King of France should occupy the fortresses of Civita Vecchia, of Terracina, and of Spoleto; lastly, that the Cardinal Valentino (this was Cesare Borgia, designated from his archbishopric of Valencia) should accompany the king, Charles VIII., as the apostolic legate, or rather as an hostage, for the fulfilment of the above conditions.

These terms concluded, they next regulated the ceremonial of the interview. The king left the Venetian palace, and went to reside at the Vatican. At an appointed hour he entered by one door the garden belonging to the palace; whilst the Pope, who had not quitted the castle of San Angelo, descended into it by another. The result of this arrangement was that the king instantly perceived the Pope, and bent his knee for the first time; but the Pope feigned not to see him, whereupon the king

advanced a few steps and repeated the ceremony; but as his Holiness was then half concealed by a clump of trees, here was an additional excuse; the king, strictly observing the ceremony, again arose, and was about to kneel for the third time, when his Holiness, fortunately seeing him, hastened forward as if to prevent it, removed his cap, embraced him, and, raising him, kissed his forehead, and would not consent to be himself covered until the king put on his cap, which Alexander assisted him to do. After a short interval and the interchange of some expressions of courtesy and friendship, the king requested that his Holiness would be pleased to collate to the Sacred College, Guillaume Briçonnet, Bishop of St. Malo. Although a previous understanding had existed between that prelate and Alexander, yet as the king was ignorant of this, the Pope still wished to have the merit of readily conceding this request, and ordered, therefore, one of his attendants to obtain immediately from his nephew, the Cardinal Valentino, a mantle and cap. Then, taking the king's hand, the Pope led him into the adjoining hall, where the ceremony of admitting the new cardinal took place. The form of taking the oath of obedience was deferred until the morrow.

On that day all the wealth and grandeur of Rome, as reflected in her nobility, clergy, and military rank, was assembled around his Holiness, whilst Charles VIII. proceeded at the same time to the Vatican with a splendid suite of prelates, princes, and noble commanders. At the palace he was met by four cardinals; two placed themselves on each side, the others immediately behind him. With this retinue he traversed a long succession of apartments lined with guards and attendants, until finally he entered the presence-chamber

where the Pope was seated upon his throne, behind which stood Cesare Borgia. Upon reaching the door the king complied with the customary ceremonials of kneeling, kissing the feet, the hand, and forehead of the pontiff; then rising, he stood, whilst the president of the parliament of Paris, advancing a few steps, thus addressed his Holiness: —

"You behold here, most holy father, my king, who is wholly inclined to take that oath of obedience to you which is due, but it is customary in France that he who tenders his vassalage to his lord obtains also the concession of such acts of favour as he may demand. His Majesty, therefore, though well resolved to exercise toward your Holiness a kingly munificence far exceeding its return, yet now asks the immediate concession of three acts of grace. These are: first, the confirmation of all privileges already granted to the king, the queen his wife, and to the dauphin his son; secondly, the investiture for himself and his successors of the kingdom of Naples; and thirdly, the delivery to him of Sultan Djem, the brother of the emperor of the Turks."

The Pope was for a moment stupefied at these demands, which Charles had thus publicly made, to deprive him of all opportunity for their refusal. But, quickly recovering his presence of mind, he replied that he would willingly confirm all privileges granted to the house of France by his predecessors; that as for the investiture of the kingdom of Naples, it was a matter for deliberation in the council of the cardinals, but that he would do everything in his power to influence the decision in his favour; and that, as regarded the brother of the sultan, he would refer the consideration of the subject at some more fitting period to the Sacred College; but, as this demand could not but be of advantage

to the general interests of Christianity, as it was preferred solely in the desire of bringing a crusade to a successful issue, he assured the king that it would be his earnest wish to obtain, on this point also, the concession he required. Upon this Charles inclined himself, to indicate his satisfaction; and, still standing uncovered before the Pope, the president renewed his discourse:

"It is an ancient custom, most holy father, of Christian kings, more particularly the most Christian kings of France, to express through their ambassadors the respect they entertain for the Holy See, and for the sovereign pontiffs whom Divine Providence raises to that eminence. But the most Christian king, desirous of visiting the tombs of the Holy Apostles, has sought, not by his ambassador, nor by any delegate, but in person, to acquit himself of this religious duty, — a duty which possesses a sacred character in his opinion. And therefore is it, most holy father, that his Majesty recognises in you the true vicar of Christ, the legitimate successor of the Holy Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and promises and vows to you that filial, reverential faith and obedience which the kings his forefathers have been wont to vow, devoting himself and the power of his kingdom to the service of your Holiness, and the interests of the Holy See."

The Pope arose with every feeling of satisfaction; for this oath so publicly taken, disburdened his mind of all fears of a council, and inclined him from that moment toward a full concession of all the king could claim. He took, therefore, his left hand, making a short and friendly reply, and addressing him as the eldest son of the Church. The ceremony over, they quitted the presence-chamber, the Pope still retaining the king's hand, and thus they walked until they arrived

at the room where the sacred robes are kept; upon reaching which, the Pope feigned a desire to reconduct the king to his apartments, but Charles not permitting this, they again saluted each other and retired.

The king's departure was delayed for eight days, during which his demands were discussed and decided to his satisfaction. The Bishop of Mans was made cardinal; the investiture of the kingdom of Naples was promised to the conqueror; and, finally, it was agreed that the Pope should deliver Djem to the care of the King of France, in consideration of a sum of 120,000 livres only. Wishing, however, to extend to the uttermost his hospitality, the Pope invited Djem to dine with him on the day of his departure from Rome, under the charge of his new protector. On the day of his departure, Charles, surrounded by a brilliant and numerous escort, repaired to the Vatican; on reaching the entrance he dismounted, and leaving his attendants in the Piazza di San Pietro, he entered it with only a few noblemen of his suite. The Pope received him with the accustomed honours; on his right hand was the Cardinal Valentino, on his left Djem, and about him were thirteen cardinals.

The king, having first bent the knee, craved the benediction of his Holiness, and inclined himself as if to kiss his feet; but Alexander, preventing this action, embraced him, and with the lips of a father and the heart of an enemy, kissed him tenderly on the forehead. He next introduced to the king the son of Mahomet II., a noble-looking youth, the richness of whose oriental robes contrasted strongly with the close and simpler costume of the Christians. Djem met the king without humility, yet without pride; and as the son of an emperor who discourses with a king, he kissed his hand

and his shoulder; then, turning toward his Holiness, he besought his recommendation to the monarch who had taken him under his protection, assuring the pontiff he should never regret having given him his liberty, and expressing to the king his hope to have reason to be thankful to him if, after the capture of Naples, he carried the war into Greece, as he proposed. These words were uttered with so much dignity and gentleness that the king extended his hand to the sultan with frank cordiality, as to a companion in arms.

After this, Charles for the last time took leave of the Pope, and rejoined his escort. He then awaited the arrival of the Cardinal Valentino, who was to accompany him as a hostage, but who yet lingered in conversation with his father. Cesare soon arrived, mounted upon a mule in splendid trappings, having behind six beautiful led horses, — a present from the Pope to the king. Charles mounted immediately upon one of these to testify his appreciation of the gift, and, quitting Rome with the remainder of his army, arrived the same evening at Marino.

He was there informed that Alfonso, false to his reputation, both as a skilful politician and a great general, had embarked with all his treasures in a flotilla of four galleys, leaving the conduct of the war and the government of his kingdom to his son Ferdinand. Thus every circumstance favoured the triumphant progress of Charles; the cities surrendered as he advanced, his enemies fled without resistance, and, without a single battle, he had already won the title of conqueror. The next morning at sunrise the army continued its march, and arrived in the evening at Velletri. The king, who had been on horseback the whole day, accompanied by the cardinal and Djem, quitted the former at

his quarters, and proceeded with the latter to his palace. Cesare in the mean time had directed his attendants to remove from one of the twenty heavily laden waggons which accompanied the baggage of the army the magnificent service of plate he was accustomed to use, and to prepare supper. In the mean time, night having closed in, he retired to a private chamber, and there, divesting himself of his cardinal's dress, he put on that of a groom. By favour of this disguise he left his quarters unrecognised, traversed rapidly the streets, and regained the open country. At a short distance from the city a servant awaited him with two fleet horses, and, retaking immediately the road toward Rome, he arrived there with his companion at break of day. He dismounted at the house of Signor Flores, the auditor of the Rota, and having procured a fresh horse, and laid aside his disguise, he went immediately to his mother, who uttered a cry of joy as she met him; for, reserved and taciturn to every one, even to her, the cardinal had concealed the design of his speedy return to Rome.

The cry of joy which Vanozza uttered was far less of love than of revenge. One evening, during the festivities of the Vatican, whilst Charles and Alexander were indulging in those lip professions of friendship which were far from the heart of either, a messenger arrived from Vanozza, requiring the immediate presence of Cesare at her house in the street Della Sengara. Cesare questioned the messenger, but in vain; he was told that what he desired to know, his mother would relate. He therefore immediately proceeded to her, dressed in a layman's habit, and wrapped in a large mantle. On approaching the house he was struck by the signs of recent tumult it presented. The street was strewn with broken fragments of furniture and remnants of rich

draperies. Around the entrance he remarked that the windows were broken, before which the half-destroyed curtains still fluttered in the wind; everything bore the marks of plunder and of riot; so that, unable to comprehend its cause, he rushed into the house, passing through various apartments, all deserted and ransacked. At last, guided by a light in one chamber, he entered, and found his mother seated on the remains of an ebony chest, which had been richly inlaid with ivory and silver. As Cesare entered, she rose, her face pale, her hair disordered, and, pointing with her hand to the confusion around, she exclaimed: —

"Behold, Cesare! Behold the work of your new friends!"

"What means this?" demanded the cardinal. "Whence arises this disorder?"

"It means," replied Vanozza, and her face was livid with rage, — "it means that the serpent that you have warmed has stung me, fearing doubtless to break its fangs on you."

"Who has done this?" exclaimed Cesare. "Name him, and I swear to you, by Heaven! this injury shall be tenfold repaid!"

"Who has done this?" she answered; "the king, Charles VIII. of France, by the agency of his most faithful allies, the Swiss. It was known Melchiori was absent, and consequently that I was protected only by a few miserable servants; therefore came they, bursting the doors as if they had stormed Rome; and whilst the Cardinal Valentino was feasting their master, they pillaged his mother's house, overwhelming her with outrages and insults, unexpected even from the worst barbarians of the Turks and Saracens."

"It is well! it is well!" he replied. "Be composed.

Blood will wash out the stains of shame. As to our loss, remember it is nothing in comparison to what we risked; and my father and I will restore far more than you have lost."

"I ask not promises, it is revenge that I require," she replied.

"Mother," said the cardinal, "you shall be avenged, or I will forfeit the name of son."

Having reassured her by these words, he conducted her to the palace of Lucrezia, and returned to the Vatican, whence he gave orders for the immediate restoration of his mother's house to more than its former splendour. It was amid this luxury, with an unabated feeling of hatred in her heart, that Cesare met his mother. They exchanged but a few words, and Cesare then returned to the Vatican, which he had left but two days before as a hostage. Alexander, informed of his intended flight, had not only approved it, but moreover, as sovereign pontiff, had absolved his son from the guilt of his perjury; he received him, therefore, with joy, but advised concealment, as Charles in all probability would not delay to claim him at his hands. In fact, on the morning following, his flight was soon discovered; and Charles, uneasy on account of his non-appearance, sent to inquire as to its cause. He was informed that Cesare had left his quarters at nine o'clock the night previous, and had not since returned. Charles immediately suspected he had fled, and in the first excitement of his anger proclaimed this act of perjury to the army.

The soldiers, recollecting the twenty waggons so heavily laden, from one of which the cardinal had publicly taken the magnificent service of gold and silver, immediately broke them to pieces, not doubting they contained articles of equal value; they were mis-

taken, they found there only sand and stones, which proved that his flight had been prearranged, and redoubled the king's anger against the Pope. He despatched upon this Philippe de Bresse, afterwards Duke of Savoy, to Rome, and commanded him to express to the Pope his extreme dissatisfaction at the conduct of his son. But the Pope replied that he was in every respect ignorant of his flight, for which he expressed the sincerest regret, averring that he knew not where he was, but at all events, that he was not in Rome. The Pope spoke truth, inasmuch as Cesare had retired with the Count Orsino to one of his estates, where for the present he was concealed. This answer was conveyed to Charles by two envoys, the bishops of Nepi and of Sutri, and the people also sent, as on their part, Monsignor Porcari, charged to express to the king their extreme displeasure at this breach of faith. Little disposed as he was to be satisfied by empty expressions, Charles felt that it was requisite to direct his attention to matters of more importance; he therefore continued without delay his march upon Naples, which he entered the 22nd of February, 1493.

Four days afterward the unhappy Djem, who had sickened at Capua, died at Castel Nuovo. In parting from him, and at the farewell banquet, Alexander had tried upon him the strength of that poison which he proposed hereafter so frequently to employ upon the cardinals, and by the effects of which, as a just retribution, he was himself to perish. Thus, by the success of his double speculation upon the unfortunate youth, he had sold his life for one hundred and twenty thousand livres to Charles VIII., and his death for three hundred thousand ducats to Bajazet. But the payment of the last sum was delayed, for it will be remembered

that the emperor of the Turks had covenanted to pay the fratricidal gold only upon condition that he received the body of his brother, and this by order of Charles had been buried at Gaeta. When Cesare received this intelligence, he rightly concluded that the king, occupied by the ceremony of his installation in his new capital, had too much to occupy his attention to permit him to be any longer a matter of interest; he returned, therefore, to Rome, stimulated by the desire of fulfilling his promise to his mother, which he soon evinced by an act of revenge.

The cardinal had in his pay a Spaniard whom he had made the chief of his bravoes; he was a man between thirty-five and forty years of age, whose whole life had been one long outrage against all social laws; he recoiled from no action, provided he was rewarded in proportion to its importance. Don Michel Corregha, who earned for himself a murderer's celebrity under the name of Michelotto, was truly a being fitted for the purposes of Cesare; and thus, whilst Michelotto was entirely devoted to him, Cesare placed an unlimited confidence in his retainer. Don Michel was commanded to overrun the campagna of Rome, and to massacre all the French he should meet with. He applied himself so diligently to the task that within the lapse of a few days the most satisfactory results were obtained; more than one hundred persons were pillaged and put to death, and among the latter was the son of the cardinal of St. Malo, who was returning to Paris, and upon whom Michelotto found a sum of three thousand crowns. For himself Cesare had reserved the Swiss; for the Swiss it was who had destroyed the house of his mother. The Pope at this period had about one hundred and fifty of these in his service, who had settled with their families in

Rome, enriched by their pay and other occupations. These the cardinal disbanded, with an order to quit Rome in twenty-four hours, and the Roman States within three days. These unfortunate beings were all assembled, in obedience to an order issued, together with their wives, children, and movables, in the Piazza di San Pietro, when suddenly the cardinal caused them to be surrounded on all sides by two thousand Spaniards, who commenced a rapid fire upon them, charging at intervals upon the mass with their swords, whilst Cesare and his mother enjoyed the spectacle of the carnage from a window. About fifty or sixty were in this manner butchered; but the remainder, joining in a body, made a bold resistance, and, not allowing themselves to be separated, fought and retreated until they reached a house, which they so valiantly defended that the Pope had time to send thither the captain of his guard, who, by the aid of a strong detachment, was enabled to conduct them in safety, to the number of forty, beyond the walls of the city; the rest had fallen in the streets or in the house.

But this was not the revenge that Cesare sought; it did not reach Charles VIII., the sole author of all the distress and vexation that the Pope and his family had experienced. He soon abandoned, therefore, as beneath him, these common plots, for designs of greater import, and applied himself with all the energy of his mind to renew the league of the Italian princes, broken by the defection of Sforza, the exile of Pietro, and the overthrow of the King of Naples. This was accomplished with greater facility than the Pope expected. The Venetians had witnessed, and not without inquietude, the march of Charles across their immediate territory, and they feared that, once master of Naples, his ambi-

tion might prompt the conquest of all Italy. On his part, Ludovico Sforza, observing the rapidity with which the king had dethroned the house of Aragon, was already haunted by the fear that he would soon forget the distinction between his enemies and his friends. Maximilian sought but an opportunity to break the truce he had agreed to, solely on account of the importance of its concessions. Ferdinand and Isabella were connected with the dethroned prince. Thus all, however widely separated by motives of self-interest, were yet united by one common fear, and all were agreed upon the necessity of driving Charles from Naples and from Italy; and they engaged by every means in their power — negotiation, surprise, or force — to contribute to this result. The Florentines alone declined to take part in this raising of bucklers, and remained faithful to their engagements.

CHAPTER IV.

ACCORDING to the articles agreed to by the confederates, the alliance was to exist for twenty-five years, and its ostensible object was to defend the majesty of the Roman pontiff and the interests of Christianity; so that it would have had all the appearance of a league against the Turks if the ambassador of Bajazet had not constantly attended their meetings, although the Christian princes had not yet ventured to enrol the name of the Emperor of Constantinople among their own. In furtherance of their design they were bound to levy an army of four thousand horse and twenty thousand foot; and each was to supply his contingent, — the Pope four thousand horse, Maximilian six thousand, the King of Spain, the Duke of Milan, and the republic of Venice each eight thousand. Each contracting power was bound also to raise and equip, within six weeks from the signature of the treaty, four thousand foot-soldiers. The fleets were to be supplied by the maritime powers, but their expenses were to be equally defrayed by all.

This league was proclaimed on the 12th of April, 1493, through all the States of Italy, amid, and this particularly at Rome, festivals and public rejoicings. Immediately upon the publication of its apparent design, the confederates commenced the fulfilment of its secret articles. Ferdinand and Isabella were engaged to send to Ischia, whither the son of Alfonso had fled, a fleet of sixty galleys, carrying six hundred horse and five thou-

sand foot, to assist in the recovery of his throne. These troops were to be placed under the command of Gonsalvo de Cordova, who had acquired by the conquest of Granada the reputation of being the first general in Europe. On their part, the Venetians engaged to attack with a fleet of forty galleys, under the orders of Antonio Grimani, all the possessions of the French on the shores of Calabria and Naples. The Duke of Milan promised to intercept all succours coming from France, and to expel the Duc d'Orleans from Asti. Maximilian and Bajazet alone remained: the former was to invade the French frontier, and the latter to assist with his money, his fleet, and troops, the Venetians or the Spaniards, according as he might be called upon by Barberigo or Ferdinand the Catholic.

This league was the more dangerous to Charles, inasmuch as the enthusiasm with which he had been received had now entirely subsided; for it had happened to him, as to conquerors in general who are blessed with good fortune rather than with great abilities, that, instead of making among the Neapolitan and Calabrian nobles and chief vassals a party inherent to and rooted in the soil, by confirming their privileges and augmenting their power, he had inflicted an injury upon all, by conferring the honours, the employments, and fiefs upon those who had followed him from France, so that the great offices of the kingdom were exclusively possessed by strangers.

As soon, therefore, as the treaty was made known, Tropea and Amantea, given by Charles to the Lord of Preey, revolted, and displayed the banner of Aragon; and the Spanish fleet had only to anchor before Reggio in Calabria to induce that city, more dissatisfied with the new than with the former government, to open its gates, whilst Don Federigo, brother of Alfonso, and uncle of

Ferdinand, who had never quitted Brindisi, had only in a similar manner to appear before Tarentum to be welcomed by the citizens as a liberator.

Charles VIII. heard this unwelcome intelligence at Naples, whence, already weary of his new conquest, which imposed upon him plans, and the labour of arrangements of which he was utterly incapable, he looked earnestly toward France, where triumphal festivals awaited him on his return. He at once yielded, therefore, to the advice of his councillors to begin his return, menaced as he was on the north by the Germans, and on the south by the Spaniards. In consequence, he appointed Gilbert de Montpensier, of the house of Bourbon, his viceroy; D'Aubigny of the Scottish house of Stuart, lieutenant of Calabria; Étrenne de Vere, commandant of Gaeta; and Don Giuliano, Gabriel de Montfaucon, Guillaume de Villeneuve, George de Silly, Bailly de Vitry, and Graziano Guerra, governors of San Angelo, Manfredonia, Trani, Catanzaro, Aquila, and Sulmone. Then, leaving with Montpensier the half of his Swiss troops and Gascons, eight hundred French lancers, and about five hundred Italian men-at-arms, — these last under the charge of the prefect of Rome, Prospero and Fabrizio Colonna, and Antonio Savelli, — he quitted Naples on the 20th of May, to traverse the extent of the Italian peninsula with the remainder of his army, consisting of eight hundred French lancers, two hundred gentlemen of his own guard, one hundred Italians, three thousand Swiss, and a thousand French and Gascons. He relied also upon being met in Tuscany by Camillo Vitelli and his brothers, at the head of two hundred and fifty men-at-arms.

Eight days prior to his departure from Naples, Charles had despatched Monseigneur de St. Paul, brother of the

cardinal of Luxembourg, to Rome, and immediately afterwards the Bishop of Lyons, upon a similar mission, both charged to assure Alexander that the King of France was still most firmly and sincerely his ally. Charles, indeed, had nothing so much at heart as to detach the Pope from the league, to obtain thereby at once a spiritual and temporal support for himself; but a youthful king, at once ambitious, bold, and brave, was not the neighbour Alexander sought: he would listen, therefore, to no overtures whatever; and as the troops he had demanded from the doge, and from Ludovico Sforza, had not yet arrived in sufficient force for the defence of Rome, he amply provisioned the castle of San Angelo, placed there a strong garrison for its defence, and, leaving the Cardinal St. Anastasius to receive Charles, retired with Cesare Borgia to Orvieto.

Charles remained but three days at Rome, chagrined that, in spite of his entreaties, Alexander had refused to await his arrival. Thus, instead of adopting the advice of Giuliano della Rovere, to call a council, and to depose the Pope, he delivered up to the Roman commanders the fortresses of Terracina and of Civita Vecchia, trusting to effect a reconciliation with the Pope by this act of amity, keeping only that of Ostia, which he had promised to restore to Giuliano. At the expiration of three days he quitted Rome. Directing his march in three columns toward Tuscany, and traversing the papal States, he arrived at Sienna on the 13th; where he was rejoined by Philippe de Comines, whom he had sent as ambassador extraordinary to the republic of Venice, and who announced to him that his enemies had forty thousand men under arms, and were preparing to cut off his retreat. This news had only the effect of causing the utmost merriment, both to the king and to

the nobles of his army; for they had conceived so great a contempt for their enemies, arising from the easy conquest of their territory, that they could not believe that any army, whatever its strength might be, would risk such an attempt. Charles was obliged to confess his mistake when he learnt at San Toranzo that the advanced guard, commanded by the Maréchal de Gie, and composed of six hundred lances and fifteen hundred Swiss, on arriving at Fornovo had found themselves opposed to the confederate army encamped at Guiarola. The marshal instantly halted and drew up his troops, profiting by the heights he occupied, the country around being well adapted for defensive operations. This done, he sent to demand from Francesco de Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, generalissimo of the confederates, a free passage for the army of the king, with provisions at a fair price, forwarding also at the same time a courier to Charles, requesting him to hasten his march, as well as that of the artillery and the rear-guard.

The confederates returned an evasive reply; for they were doubtful whether they should risk in one battle the army of Italy, or whether they should endeavour at one blow to destroy the king, thus burying the conqueror amid his conquests. The courier found Charles occupied in directing the transport of his artillery over the heights of Pentremoli, — a matter of great difficulty; for there being no open road, they were forced to drag up and lower the guns by main strength, which occupied at least two hundred men for each piece. But this being at last effected, Charles set forward for Fornovo, where he arrived on the following morning with his body-guard. From the summit of the mountain, where the Maréchal de Gie was posted, Charles at one view surveyed the ground occupied by the two

camps. They were on the right bank of the Taro, at the extremity of a circle of a chain of hills rising as an amphitheatre around; so that the space between the two camps, a vast basin bounded by a swollen torrent, was a broken, gravelly plain, equally unsuited for the movements of cavalry or infantry. To the right lay a little wood which followed the western declivity of the hill, stretching out from the Italian toward the French army, and now occupied by the Stradiotes, who, availing themselves of its coverts, had been already engaged in slight skirmishes with the French troops during their two days' halt to await the arrival of the king.

This position was not encouraging, for, from the height he occupied, the king could readily survey, and calculate the numerical difference between, the two armies. Indeed, the French army, weakened by the numerous garrisons it had been obliged to leave in the cities and fortresses it had so lately conquered, now scarcely amounted in all to eight thousand soldiers, whilst the number of the enemy exceeded thirty-five thousand men. Charles resolved therefore to negotiate, and sent Comines to the Venetian Proveditori, with whom, owing to his great merits, he possessed considerable influence. He was charged to say, in the name of the King of France, that his master's only desire was uninterruptedly to continue his march; that therefore he required a free passage across the plains of Lombardy, which extended before him to the foot of the Alps.

Great dissension prevailed amongst the confederates when Comines arrived. The advice of the Milanese and the Venetians was to allow the march of the king unchecked, — too fortunate, said they, if thus he abandoned Italy without further loss to them; but this opinion was opposed by the Spaniards and Germans.

For as their sovereigns had no troops in the army, and their quota of expense had been already paid, they could but profit by a battle; since if gained, they would gather the fruits of victory, and if defeated, would scarcely suffer from the results.

The king passed a night of great anxiety; there had been every indication of rain during the past day, and as the Taro is rapidly swollen by the mountain streams, its bed, fordable to-day, might be impassable on the morrow; and the delay which the confederates had imposed upon Comines was probably demanded only to increase the difficulties of the French army. At night a terrible storm burst over the Apennines, which raged until the break of day; and the Taro, which before had glided as a gentle stream, had now overflowed its banks, and was rushing onward with a torrent's force. The king, therefore, at an early hour, already armed and on horseback, summoned Comines, and ordered him to proceed to the place appointed by the confederates for the continuance of the negotiations; but scarcely was the order given, when loud cries were heard from the extreme right of the French army. The Stradiotes, sheltered by the woods, had surprised an outpost, cut it to pieces, and carried, according to their custom, the heads of the vanquished at their saddlebows.

A detachment of cavalry had been sent to check and pursue them, but, like beasts of prey, they had retreated to their woods, where they were soon out of sight. This unexpected attack, incited probably by the Spanish and German ambassadors, produced along the line the effect of a spark upon a train of powder. Comines, on his part, as well as the Venetian Proveditori, endeavoured, but in vain, to put a stop to the disorder; the light-horse pressed forward, and, following, as was too

much the custom, the dangerous influence of personal courage, were already engaged, descending into the plain, as into a circus, and seeking an opportunity for distinction. For a moment the young king, betrayed by a similar feeling, was about to forget also his responsibility as a general, to act as the soldier; but the Maréchal de Gie, M. Claude de La Châtre, M. de Guise, and M. de La Trémouille, checked his impetuosity, and induced him to adopt a wiser course, which was to cross the Taro without provoking, but without avoiding an engagement, if the enemy should attempt to prevent his passage.

Acting upon this advice, the king drew up his army in the following manner: The first division was composed of the advanced guard and a corps destined for its support, computed at three hundred and fifty men-at-arms, the best and bravest of the army, commanded by the Maréchal de Gie and Jacques Trivulce, and three thousand Swiss, under the orders of Engelbert de Cleves and De Lornay, to whom were added three hundred archers of the guard, on foot, in aid of the cavalry. The second, led by the king, and which formed the main body of the army, consisted of the artillery commanded by Jean de Lagrange, of one hundred gentlemen of the guard, with their banner borne by Gilles Carrmel, the pensioners of the king's household, under D'Aymar de Prie; the Scotch; two hundred mounted crossbowmen; and the remainder of the French archers under the command of M. de Crussol. The third, or rear-guard, preceded by the baggage, was composed of three hundred men-at-arms, under M. de Guise and De La Trémouille; and this was the least effective division of the army.

These orders executed, Charles directed the advanced guard to cross the river, which was instantly done oppo-

site to Fornovo, the water being up to the knees of the horsemen, and the foot-soldiers holding on by the tails of the horses. When he saw they had gained the opposite side, he put his troops in motion, to ford the river at the same spot, commanding De Guise and De La Trémouille to regulate the march of the rear upon that of his division. De Guise strictly obeyed his instructions, and about ten o'clock in the morning the whole of the French army were upon the left bank of the Taro; and at the same time, as the enemy were rapidly advancing, the baggage, under Odet de Riberac, was removed from the rear to a position on the extreme left. Francesco de Gonzaga, general-in-chief of the confederates, had regulated his plans by those of the king. By his orders the Count of Cajazzo, with four hundred men-at-arms, and two thousand foot-soldiers, was to cross the Taro, near the Venetian camp, to oppose the French advanced guard, whilst he, ascending the river as far as Fornovo, should effect a passage by the same ford as Charles, to attack his rear. Between the two fords he had drawn up the Stradiotes, with orders that as soon as they saw the French attacked both in front and rear, they should cross the river, and engage them in flank. In addition, Gonzaga, in case of retreat, had left upon the other bank of the river three corps of reserve, — one to protect the camp, under the orders of the Proveditori, and the others, under Antonio de' Montefeltro and Annibale Bentivoglio, drawn up in echelons, so as to support each other.

These manœuvres had not passed unobserved by Charles, who recognised in them that skilful strategy which made the generals of Italy the first tacticians of the world; but, unable to avoid the danger, he ordered the army still to advance. This onward movement was

hardly commenced before he was attacked by Cajazzo, with his four hundred men-at-arms and two thousand infantry, and by Gonzaga, who, as arranged, charged the rear with six hundred men, a squadron of Stradiotes, and more than five thousand foot-soldiers, forming the *élite* of his force, and greatly exceeding in this one division the entire force of the French. When De Guise and De La Trémouille found themselves thus hemmed in, they ordered their men to wheel about, whilst De Gie and Trivulce, who commanded the advanced division, drew up, and brought their lances to rest. In the mean time the king, stationed in the centre, knighted such of the gentlemen as, by their valour, or his esteem for them, had claims to this distinction.

Suddenly the cries of a violent onset were heard; it was from the rear, now engaged with the Marquis of Mantua. In this encounter, where each had selected his opponent, as in a tourney, many lances were broken, particularly among the Italians, for theirs, being hollowed to make them lighter, were consequently less solid. Those who were thus disarmed immediately drew their swords; and as they greatly exceeded his troops in numbers, the king saw them suddenly fall upon the right wing, as if to surround it, whilst at the same time loud shouts were heard in front of the centre division, which proceeded from the Stradiotes, who had now crossed the river, and commenced their attack. The king instantly divided his force into two detachments; and, giving the command of one to the Bastard of Bourbon, to enable him to hold the Stradiotes in check, he charged with the other to the aid of the advanced guard, throwing himself into the thickest of the *mêlée*, striking like a king, but fighting like the lowest of his commanders. Thus relieved, the rear

maintained their position, although the enemy was as five to one, and here the combat was maintained with the most inveterate courage.

The Bastard of Bourbon threw himself before the Stradiotes, according to the king's orders, but, carried away by his horse, he was borne into their ranks, and instantly cut down. This loss of their chief, the strange costume of their antagonists, and their peculiar mode of warfare, caused at first some confusion among his troops; the centre fell into disorder, and gave way, breaking their ranks, instead of keeping together and resisting as a mass. This false step would have been destructive, if many of the Stradiotes, seeing the baggage exposed, had not, instead of following up their advantage, rushed toward it in the hope of winning a rich booty. The main body, however, still remained, pressing vigorously the French, and rendering their lances useless by their terrible scimitars.

At this moment the king, who had repulsed the attack of the Marquis of Mantua, returned to the aid of the centre, and charged the Stradiotes at the head of the gentlemen of his household, armed no longer with his lance, which he had broken, but with his sword, which flashed round his head like lightning; but, whether carried forward by his horse, or urged onward by his impetuous spirit, he was suddenly entangled amid the Stradiotes, accompanied only by eight of his men, one of his esquires, and his standard-bearer. The cry of "France, France, France! to the rescue!" quickly rallied the remainder, who, seeing that the danger was less than was at first suspected, began to take speedy vengeance on the Stradiotes for the blows they had received.

Things went still better in front, which Cajazzo was

to have attacked; for although commanding a division greatly superior in numbers to the French, and although he seemed at first to intend a formidable assault, he drew up suddenly at full charge about twelve paces from his opponents, and wheeled about without crossing a single lance. The French wished to pursue; but De Gie, fearful it might be a snare to separate the front from the centre, ordered this line to maintain its position. The Swiss, however, ignorant of the order, or neglecting it, followed the enemy, and although on foot, overtook and engaged them, slaying about a hundred, which threw the remainder into such disorder that some fled straggling over the plain, whilst others crossed the river to regain their camp. De Gie, upon this, despatched a hundred men to aid the king, who, still fighting with the utmost courage, risked his life at every instant, constantly separated from his officers, who could not follow him, throwing himself with the rallying cry of "France!" wherever the danger was the greatest, and regardless of support. He no longer fought with his sword, which he had broken as well as his lance, but with a heavy battle-axe, of which every stroke was fatal, whether from the blow or thrust.

The Stradiotes, thus pressed, had changed their attack into defence, and their defence into flight. It was then the king was exposed to the greatest danger; for, following their retreat with his accustomed impetuosity, he was again alone and surrounded by them in such numbers that, had not panic rendered them unobservant to their advantage, they had only to unite to crush both horse and rider. "But he is well protected," says Comines, "whom God protects; and God preserved the King of France." Nevertheless, the rear was still much harassed, for though De Guise and La Trémouille

still maintained their position, yet it is probable they must have yielded to superior force if succour had not unexpectedly arrived from two quarters. The first was brought by the king, who, freed from danger amid the fugitives, sought it again amid the combatants. The second was from the retainers of the army, who, upon the flight of the Stradiotes, arming themselves with the axes used to cut the wood for erecting the tents, fell upon the enemy, hamstringing the horses, and breaking the helmets of the dismounted cavaliers.

The Italians could not resist this double shock; the *furia francese* defied all the calculations of strategy. For a century they had forgotten or laid aside these bloody contests for the kind of tournament they had nicknamed war; so that, notwithstanding the efforts of Gonzaga, the rear hesitated, wheeled around and fled, recrossing in great haste, and with the utmost difficulty, the Taro, now still more swollen by the rain which had fallen continuously during the conflict. Charles was advised by some to follow up his advantage, for such was the disorder of the confederates that from the field of battle, which the French had so honourably won, they were seen flying scattered in all directions; but the Maréchal de Gie and De Guise and La Trémouille, who could not even be suspected of recoiling before any fancied danger, restrained this impulse, observing that both men and horse were now so fatigued that an attempt of this kind might risk the victory already in their hands. Their opinion was adopted, although opposed by Trivulce, Camillo Vitelli, and Francesco Secco. The king, therefore, retired to a little village upon the left bank of the Taro, where he dismounted and took off his armour. Of all the officers and soldiers of his army, he had probably been the best and bravest combatant.

The stream of the Taro was so increased during the night that the Italians, even had they recovered from their shock, could not have advanced in pursuit. Charles, on his side, having conquered, had no desire to show signs of flight; he remained, therefore, the next day under arms, sleeping the same evening at Medesina, a village a mile only from the spot where he had first rested after the battle. But reflecting that he had done enough to maintain the honour of his army, having beaten an enemy whose numbers were quadruple his own, leaving three thousand of their dead upon the field, and having waited the renewal of the combat for a day and a half, had they desired to retrieve their loss, he ordered his watch-fires to be renewed to induce the confederates to believe him still encamped, and then, two hours before daybreak, his troops, now nearly beyond danger of attack, were silently put in motion and advanced upon Borgo San Donino.

In the mean time the Pope had re-entered Rome, where news quite in accordance with his policy soon reached him. Ferdinand had gone from Sicily into Calabria with six thousand volunteers and a considerable number of Spanish horse and foot, headed by the famous Gonsalvo de Cordova, whose reputation as a general was great, although slightly tarnished by the defeat at Seminora. About the same time the Aragonese fleet had defeated the French; and the battle of the Taro, although a defeat for the confederates, was yet a victory for the Pope, as its result was to open a retreat toward France of the monarch whom he regarded as his deadliest enemy. Thus assured that he had no more to fear, he despatched a mandate to Charles,— who had delayed his march to succour Novara,— by which, in virtue of his pontifical authority, he ordered him to quit Italy with his army

and to recall all his troops from Naples within the space of ten days, on pain of being excommunicated and summoned to appear before him in person. Charles VIII. replied that he was at a loss to conceive how the Pope could order him to quit Italy, seeing that the army of the League, of which he was the head, had not only refused, but also had endeavoured, though in vain, to prevent his free return to France, — a fact of which probably his Holiness was aware; secondly, that as to the recall of his troops from Naples, he could not be guilty of an act so irreligious, considering they had entered that city, not only with the full consent, but with the apostolic benediction of his Holiness; thirdly, that as to his appearance in person in the capital of the Christian world, he was astonished that such a demand should be now made, seeing that scarcely six weeks before, when he earnestly desired to obtain an interview to evince his filial reverence and obedience, his Holiness, instead of granting the favour he solicited, had quitted Rome with such precipitation that he could not effect his purpose, how great soever his diligence had been; that as for this last article, however, he would promise his Holiness, if he would engage to await his arrival, to give him the fullest satisfaction upon this point by returning to Rome as soon as the affairs of state, which had recalled him to his kingdom, were arranged to his satisfaction.

However Charles might indulge in this haughty raillery, he was not less constrained to obey in part the strange mandate he had received. In fact, notwithstanding the arrival of a reinforcement of Swiss, he was constrained, so urgent was the necessity of his return to France, to conclude a treaty with Ludovico Sforza, by which he ceded to him Novara, whilst Gilbert de Montpensier and D'Aubigny, after having defended, step by

step, Calabria and Naples, were reduced, after a siege of thirty-two days, to sign the capitulation of Atella on the 20th of July, 1496. By this Ferdinand was acknowledged King of Naples, and put in possession of all the fortresses and places belonging thereto, but which he enjoyed only for three months, as he died on the 7th of September at the castle of Somma, near Vesuvius. He was succeeded by his uncle Frederic; and thus within three years Alexander, whilst he established his power on the throne of the pontiffs, had witnessed the transition of five kings on the throne of Naples: Ferdinand I., Alfonso II., Charles VIII., Ferdinand II., and Frederic.

Every such event was, however, of great advantage to Alexander, since every successive king was king only upon the condition of receiving investiture from the Pope. The result was that both in power and opinion Alexander was the only one who had gained by these changes, having been successively recognised, in spite of his acts of simony, as the supreme head of the Church by the Duke of Milan, the republics of Florence and of Venice, and in addition flattered and courted by the five kings who had occupied the throne of Naples. He thought, therefore, that the period was now arrived to advance his plans for the future greatness of his house; on the one hand by the Duke of Gandia, who should possess all the temporal dignities, and on the other by Cesare, who could be raised to all the ecclesiastical offices.

To execute this design the Pope elevated four Spaniards to the cardinalship, which, increasing the number of his countrymen in the college to twenty-two, assured him a constant and certain majority. It was next a point of political importance to sweep away from the environs of Rome all those petty nobles known as vicars of the

Church, but whom Alexander called "handcuffs of the papacy." He had already started the movement by exciting the Orsini against the Colonnas, when the invasion of Charles obliged him to desist, and to combine all the resources of his mind and the forces of the papal States to provide for his own protection. The Orsini, the ancient friends of the Pope, had, however, joined the French, and entered with them into the kingdom of Naples; and Virginio, one of the chiefs of that powerful family, had been made prisoner during the war, and was now a captive in the hands of Ferdinand. This was an opportunity Alexander could not neglect; therefore, having first commanded the King of Naples not to release his prisoner, whom, since the 1st of June, 1496, he had declared a rebel, on the 26th of October following, immediately subsequent to the accession of Frederic, whom he knew to be entirely dependent upon him, not having yet received the investiture, he proceeded to pronounce a sentence of confiscation against Virginio and the Orsini; but as a mere sentence of confiscation was ineffectual, and as it was requisite to dispossess them of their estates, he made overtures to the Colonnas, alleging that as a mark of his esteem he intrusted to them, under the direction of his son Francesco, Duke of Gandia, the execution of the decree against their enemies, — thus constantly weakening his neighbours by availing himself of their mutual hatred, until he could with safety attack and destroy both. The Colonnas accepted his proposal; the Duke of Gandia was named general of the Church, — an office which his father conferred upon him in the church of St. Peter.

At first everything proceeded to the Pope's satisfaction, and before the close of the year the papal army was in possession of many castles and fortresses belonging to

the Orsini, so that they considered themselves lost; when Charles VIII. — whose aid they had solicited, with but faint hopes, preoccupied as he was with the affairs of his own kingdom, so that he could not greatly assist them — sent them, in default of troops, Carlo, son of Virginio Orsinio, and Vitellozzo Vitelli, brother of Camillo Vitelli, one of the three valiant *condottieri* who had fought with him at the battle of the Taro. Their acknowledged bravery and military skill, aided by a considerable sum of money with which Charles had provided them, was attended with the most favourable results; for no sooner had they arrived at Citta-di-Castello, and announced their intention to raise troops, than men everywhere enlisted under their banner. These were soon organised; and as the Vitelli had, during their residence in France, particularly studied the military system there in use, which was superior to the Italian, they adopted the improvements it suggested. These consisted chiefly in changes connected with the artillery, and in substituting for the arms generally in use pikes similar to those borne by the Swiss but two feet longer, in the management of which Vitelli exercised his men for four months; at the expiration of which time, having obtained some auxiliaries from Perusia, Todi, and Narni, he advanced toward Bracciano, to which the Duke of Urbino, in the interest of the Pope, had laid siege. The Venetian general, hearing of Vitelli's approach, advanced to meet him, and the two armies met at Swiano, where an engagement immediately took place.

The army of the Pope had a division of about eight hundred Germans, upon which the Dukes of Urbino and of Gandia principally relied; and justly so, they being in fact the best troops in Europe. Vitelli, however, attacked them with his infantry, who, armed with their formid-

able pikes, transfixed their opponents, whose weapons were four feet shorter, before they could return their thrust. At the same time his light artillery, keeping pace with the most rapid movements of the army, soon silenced the enemy's fire; so that, after a long resistance, the papal troops fled, carrying with them, toward Ronciglione, the Duke of Gandia, wounded in the face by a pike, Fabrizio Colonna, and the legate. The Duke of Urbino, who fought in the rear to protect the retreat, was taken prisoner, with all his artillery and baggage. Great as this success was, it did not mislead Vitelli as to his position; he knew that the Orsini were too much weakened to continue the war, that their military fund would be soon exhausted, and that the disbandment of their troops must then ensue. He hastened, therefore, to excuse his victory by offering terms that he would probably have refused to sign if he had been beaten; and these were instantly acceded to by the Pope, who, in the interval, had heard that Trivulce was about to repass the Alps, and to return to Italy with three thousand Swiss, and feared, moreover, that this was but the advanced guard of the King of France. It was consequently agreed that the Orsini should pay seventy millions of florins for the expenses of the war, and that the prisoners should be exchanged on both sides without ransom, excepting the Duke of Urbino. As security for the payment of the sum agreed upon, the Orsini surrendered the fortresses of Anguillara and of Cervetri; and as, upon the day appointed for its payment, the amount was not forthcoming, they delivered up, instead, the Duke of Urbino (whose ransom, fixed at 40,000 ducats, was nearly equivalent) to the papal commissioners, the Cardinals Sforza and San Severino.

Alexander VI., a rigid observer of stipulations upon

this occasion, exacted from his own general, taken prisoner in his service, the ransom which was due to his enemies. Moreover, he remitted to Carlo Orsino and Vitellozzo Vitelli the dead body of Virginio, in default of his living person. By fatality the prisoner had died only eight days before the signature of the treaty, of the same malady which had carried off so suddenly the brother of Bajazet. It was just as this treaty was signed that Prospero Colonna and Gonsalvo de Cordova, whom the Pope had requested Frederic to send to his assistance, arrived with a force of Spaniards and Neapolitans. Unable to direct them against the Orsini, and unwilling to appear as preferring a useless request, he employed them for the reduction of Ostia. Gonsalvo was recompensed for this by receiving from the hands of the Pope the consecrated "golden rose," the highest distinction his Holiness could confer, and which honour he shared with Maximilian, the King of France, the Doge of Venice, and the Marquis of Mantua.

Meanwhile, the festival of the Assumption drew nigh, at which Gonsalvo was invited to assist. In consequence he quitted his palace, and went in great pomp to meet the papal cavalry, placing himself upon the left of the Duke of Gandia, whose personal beauty, heightened by his splendid retinue, attracted universal attention; for he was followed by a suite of pages and valets, whose liveries exceeded in splendour anything previously witnessed in Rome, the city of religious pomp. These were all mounted on horses, in rich caparisons of velvet with deep silver fringes, amid which were hung, at regular distances, bells of the same metal. The duke himself was clothed in a robe of gold brocade, wearing around his neck a string of the most costly oriental pearls, and on his cap a chain of gold, ornamented with diamonds, the

smallest of which was valued at twenty thousand ducats. This magnificence was the more enhanced by its contrast with the plain costume of Cesare Borgia, whose purple robe admitted of no ornament whatever. Cesare's hatred of his brother was increased by the murmurs of applause that everywhere greeted his approach; and from that moment he had decided upon the fate of the man who incessantly crossed the path of his pride, his passions, and his ambition. As for the Duke of Gandia, "it was well for him to leave," says Tommasi, "by this fête a public memorial of his gracefulness and of his splendour, as this pomp was but the precursor of his funeral."

But Alexander was not content that his son should enjoy a merely vain triumph of wealth and pride, and the war with the Orsini not having realised its proposed results, he decided to increase his possessions by doing that for which in his discourse he had reproached Calixtus; namely, by separating from the papal estates the cities of Benevento, Terracina, and Pontecorvo, and erecting them into a duchy, to be given as an appanage to the Duke of Gandia. This was proposed and decided upon in full consistory, and served still more to exasperate the hatred of Cesare, who nevertheless shared in the paternal favours, being appointed legate *à latere* at the court of the King of Naples.

Lucrezia, who had arrived at Rome ostensibly to be present at the festival, but in truth to be again the means of promoting the ambitious designs of her father, after having passed a few days with him and her brothers, had secluded herself in the convent of San Sisto, without any known reason for this step, and in spite of the repeated solicitations of Cesare that she should delay her resolution till the day of his departure for Naples. This obstinacy on her part awakened suspicions on his; for

from the day when the Duke of Gandia had so attracted the attention of the people, he thought she evinced an increasing coldness toward him; and his hatred toward the rival of his shameless passion rose to such a height that he resolved to sweep him from his path, whatever might be the consequence. He desired, therefore, the chief of his sbirri to attend him in his palace the same evening.

Michelotto was well prepared for these mysterious messages, the objects of which generally were to serve some amour, or to accomplish some deed of vengeance; and, as in either case he was well rewarded, he was prompt at the rendezvous at the appointed hour. Cesare awaited his arrival, carelessly leaning against a large projecting chimney-piece, clothed no longer in the cardinal's robe and hat, but in a doublet of black velvet, the slashes of which displayed a satin vest of the same colour. One of his hands played mechanically with his gloves, whilst the other rested upon a poisoned dagger, never absent from his side. This was the costume usually worn by him upon his nocturnal adventures; it excited in Michelotto, therefore, no surprise; he remarked only that Cesare's eyes flashed more luridly than usual, and his cheeks, generally pale, were then absolutely livid. Michelotto at one glance saw the coming shadow of a deed of evil. Cesare motioned to him to close the door; he was obeyed; then, after a short interval, during which the eyes of Borgia seemed as if they would scan every thought and feeling of the reckless bravo who stood uncovered before him, —

"Michelotto," he said, with a voice of which a slight accent of raillery betrayed the only sign of emotion, "what think you; does this costume become me?"

Habituated as the bravo was to the circumlocutions

with which his master most frequently prefaced his designs, this question was so unexpected that for a moment he was silent, then answered: "Admirably! and, thanks to it, your Excellency has now the appearance, as well as the heart, of a brave soldier."

"I am well pleased that this is your opinion," replied Cesare; "and now can you tell me why, instead of this dress, which I can wear only at night, I am forced to disguise myself by day beneath the robe and hat of a cardinal, and to spend my life in riding from church to church, consistory to consistory, instead of leading to the field of battle some noble army, in which you should hold the rank of captain, in lieu of being, as you are, the poor chief of a band of miserable sbirri?"

"Yes, monsignor," replied Michelotto, who had guessed, from his first words, the intentions of Cesare, "yes; he who is the cause of this is Francesco, Duke of Gandia and of Benevento, your elder brother."

"Know you," resumed Cesare, giving to this answer no further sign of approbation than a slight movement of his head, whilst a ghastly smile lingered upon his features,—"know you who has the wealth and not the genius; who has the casque and not the head; who has the sword and not the hand?"

"Again the Duke of Gandia!" said Michelotto.

"Know you, moreover, the man who is ever in the way of my ambition, my power, and my love?"

"Still the Duke of Gandia!"

"And what think you of it?" demanded Cesare.

"I think — that he must die!" coolly replied the bravo.

"And your opinion is mine, Michelotto," said Cesare, advancing toward him, and grasping his hand; "and my sole regret is, not to have thought so before; for had I

last year borne but a sword, instead of a crozier, I should be now the possessor of some rich domain. The Pope wishes to advance the greatness of his house; it is well, but he mistakes the means. It is I he should create a duke; it is my brother he should nominate a cardinal. Had he done this, one thing is most certain: I should have united to the authority of his power the intrepidity of a heart resolute to make that authority and power more effective. He whose ambition would ruin a State or a kingdom must trample under foot the obstacles in his path; he must strike with the sword or the poniard, nor fear to steep his hands in his own blood. He should follow the example left by all the founders of empires, from Romulus to Bajazet, who became kings by fratricide! And well have you said, Michelotto; what their position was is mine, and I am resolved never to recoil before it. You now know for what purpose you have been summoned. Was I right, — can I depend on you?"

Michelotto, who saw his own advantage in the crime, was indifferent to the rest; he answered, therefore, that he was entirely at Cesare's disposal; he had only to intimate the time, place, and mode of execution. Cesare replied that as to the time, it must be soon, as he himself was about to depart for Naples; as to the place and mode of execution, these would necessarily depend upon their opportunities, but that in the mean time both must watch, and seize the first favourable occasion.

On the following morning Cesare learnt that the day of his departure was fixed for the 15th of June, and received at the same time an invitation from his mother to sup with her on the 14th. Michelotto was directed to be in readiness that night at eleven.

The table was arranged in the open air, and in an

extensive vineyard that Vanozza possessed, near San Pietro ad Vincula. The guests were, Cesare Borgia, the Duke of Gandia, the Prince de Squillace, Dona Sancia, his wife, the Cardinal of Monte Reale, Francesco Borgia, son of Calixtus III., Don Rodrigo Borgia, Don Godfredo, brother of Cardinal Giovanni Borgia, and Don Alfonso Borgia, nephew of the Pope,— in fact, all the family, Lucrezia excepted, who, residing still at the convent, had refused to be present. It was a splendid repast. Cesare seemed as gay as was his wont; the Duke of Gandia more animated than usual. They were yet at table when a man masked brought to the young duke a letter, which he instantly opened, whilst his cheeks were flushed with joy. After reading it, he merely said, "I will go." He then thrust it hastily into his pocket,— but not so quickly as to elude the rapid glance of Cesare, who thought he recognised in the address the handwriting of his sister Lucrezia.

The messenger departed without attracting the attention of any one but Cesare, for it was then the custom for messages of assignation to be brought either by men whose features were concealed by a mask, or by women hidden by a veil. At ten o'clock the guests arose from the table; yet, as the air still breathed the calm luxury of an Italian climate, they walked for some time among the beautiful pines which shaded Vanozza's palace, but without Cesare's losing sight for one minute of his brother. At eleven the Duke of Gandia went away; Cesare did the same, alleging as a reason that he was desirous of proceeding that evening to the Vatican, to take leave of the Pope,— a duty he could not discharge on the morrow, his departure being fixed for the break of day.

The brothers, therefore, departed together, mounted

their horses and proceeded side by side until they reached the Palazzo Borgia, where the Cardinal Ascanio Sforza then resided, having received it as a gift from the Pope on the day of his election. The Duke of Gandia here separated from his brother, saying, with a smile, that it was not yet his intention to return home, as he must first keep an engagement he had made. Cesare replied that he was in all respects the master of his own actions, and bade him good-night. The Duke of Gandia turned to the right, Cesare to the left, remarking, only, that the street down which the duke proceeded led toward the monastery in which Lucrezia resided; then, with this slight confirmation of his suspicion, he turned his horse toward the Vatican, where, having found the Pope, he took leave, and received his benediction. From that hour all is as obscure as the darkness which shrouded the terrible event now to be related.

On quitting Cesare, the Duke of Gandia appears to have dismissed his attendants and proceeded with a valet toward the Piazza della Giudecca. He here found the man who had spoken to him during the banquet, and, forbidding his servant to follow him any farther, he desired him to await his return in the street in which they then were, adding that in about two hours he would rejoin him. At the time mentioned the duke returned, dismissed his masked conductor, and proceeded toward his palace; but scarcely had he passed the corner Del Ghetto, when he was attacked by four men on foot, directed by a man on horseback. Supposing that he either was assailed by robbers, or was the victim of some mistake, the Duke of Gandia called out his name; but this, instead of arresting the daggers of the murderers, served but to redouble their blows, and he soon fell dead by the body of his dying servant.

The horseman, who, passive and motionless, had hitherto witnessed the scene, now reined his horse backward toward the body, which was placed by the four assassins behind him; these then walked on the right and on the left of the horseman, to conceal the body and keep it in place, and the party soon disappeared in the narrow street which leads to the church Santa Maria di Monticelli. As for the servant, believing him to be dead, they left him stretched upon the pavement. But as he partially recovered, his groans were heard by the inmates of a poor dwelling-house, who raised and placed him upon a bed, where he instantly expired, without being able to give the slightest indication of the assassins, or of their victim.

The duke's return was awaited at his palace that night and the following morning; expectation became fear, and fear soon became alarm; his friends sought the Pope and informed him that since his departure from his mother's house, the duke had not been seen. But Alexander endeavoured to dissipate their anxiety and his own, hoping that his son, overtaken by daylight in some intrigue, was awaiting the closing-in of night, to return home. But the night passed as the day, — he came not; so that the following morning the Pope, a prey to the saddest forebodings, abandoned himself to grief, unable to give utterance to more than these words, a thousand times repeated: "Search for him; search for him; ascertain how my poor son died!" His wish was earnestly complied with, for the duke was beloved by all; but inquiry was in vain, they discovered only the body of the valet; of the master there was no trace. Thinking, however, that he had probably been thrown into the Tiber, they commenced their search, ascending the river from the street Della Ripetta, inquiring of all the boatmen, or

fishermen, who might have seen, either from their windows or from their boats, whatever had happened in their vicinity during the two preceding nights. At first all inquiry was useless, but on reaching the street Del Fontanone, they found a man who stated that during the night of the fourteenth or fifteenth he had witnessed a circumstance that might have some connexion with the subject of their anxiety. The following was his statement: —

"Having left, on Wednesday evening, my cargo of wood upon the bank, I remained in my boat enjoying the freshness of the night, and watching lest another should remove what I had just discharged, when, toward two o'clock in the morning, I observed two men advance from the street to the left of the church of San Geronimo, whose cautious glances, directed on all sides, showed they had come thither to observe whether any one was passing but themselves. Assured that the street was empty, they returned, and from it two more shortly emerged, using the same precaution, as if to satisfy themselves that all was as before; which being so, they gave a signal to their comrades to rejoin them. A man on horseback now came forward, having behind him a corpse, the head and arms of which hung down on one side, the legs upon the other, supported by the two men I had first noticed examining the street and places adjacent. Three of them now approached the river, whilst the others watched the street, and, turning toward the spot where the filth of the city is discharged into the Tiber, the horseman backed his horse toward the stream, and the two men at his side taking the body, one by the feet, the other by the head, swung it to and fro a few times, and then threw it with all their strength into the river. On hearing the noise of its fall into the water,

the cavalier asked, 'Is all over; is it done?' The men replied, 'Yes, signor.' He turned his horse round, and seeing a dark mass floating upon the stream, he inquired what that might be. 'Signor, it is his mantle,' replied one, whereupon another, running toward the place where it was yet seen, sunk it immediately with stones. This done, they retired, proceeding along the principal street, but soon disappearing in the narrow way which leads you toward San Giacomo."

Upon this, which destroyed all hopes, even in the hearts of those in whom hope had hitherto lingered, one of the servants of the Pope demanded why, being the witness of such a scene, he had not instantly denounced it to the governor. But the man replied that since he had begun to work upon the river he had seen bodies thrown in a similar manner a hundred times into its stream, without hearing that it had ever caused the slightest anxiety; he was persuaded, therefore, that it would be as before, and had not considered it to be a duty to speak, believing no greater importance would be attached to the present than to any former occurrence of the sort.

Guided by the information thus obtained, the servants of his Holiness collected immediately the boatmen and fishermen of the river, and, promising a high reward to him who should first discover the body, they had soon more than a hundred of them at work, so that before evening of the same day, two bodies were brought up, one of which was instantly recognised as that of the murdered duke. The first examination of it left no doubt as to the cause of his death. He had been stabbed in nine places, his clothes remained untouched, his purse was filled with gold; it was evidently an act of revenge, and not one of robbery. The boat in which the body

was placed ascended the river to the castle of San Angelo, where, upon its arrival, it was clothed in the splendid dress the duke had worn at the festival of the Assumption, and near it were arranged the insignia of the general of the Church. It remained thus exposed for one day to all but his father, whose grief would not suffer him to witness the scene. At night his most faithful attendants bore the body to the church della Madonna del Popolo, with all that pomp with which the court and the Church could at once invest the funeral of a Pope's son.

CHAPTER V.

In the mean time Cesare Borgia had placed with his blood-stained hands the crown upon the head of Frederic of Aragon. This blow had deeply affected Alexander; but, ignorant at first whom to suspect, he had given the most rigorous orders to discover the assassins. But slowly the hideous truth revealed itself before him. He saw that the blow which had thus stricken his house proceeded from his house. His despair became frenzy. He ran like one frantic through the Vatican, and, entering the consistory, his clothes torn, his hair dishevelled and covered with ashes, he confessed with broken sobs all the crimes and disorders of his past life, acknowledging the blow, inflicted on his own blood by his own blood, to be the just retribution of God; then retiring into one of the darkest and most secret recesses of his palace, he shut himself up, determined, as he said, to starve himself to death. And, in fact, for more than sixty hours he denied himself all food and rest, replying to those who sought to divert him from his purpose with tears and groans, or the howlings of a wild beast; so that at length Giulia Farnese, his new mistress, in general known as Giulia Bella, unable to influence him, was obliged to seek Lucrezia to overcome his fatal resolution. Lucrezia left her retreat, where she yet sorrowed over the death of the Duke of Gandia, to endeavour to console her father. At her voice the door opened, and then only the Cardinal of Segovia, who

had been nearly a whole day kneeling upon the threshold, imploring his Holiness to subdue his grief, was enabled to enter with the attendants, who brought in some wine and refreshments.

The Pope remained alone with Lucrezia three days and nights; he then reappeared in public, calm, if not resigned. Guicciardini assures us that his daughter had clearly shown how dangerous it would be for him to evince before the assassin, who was about to return, the great affection which he bore toward the assassin's victim. Cesare was still at Naples, remaining there as well to give the father's grief time to abate as to conclude another negotiation with which he was charged, which was no less a matter than proposals of marriage between Lucrezia and Don Alfonso of Aragon, Duke of Bicelli and Prince of Salerno, natural son of Alfonso II., and brother of Donna Sancia. It is true that Lucrezia was married to the Signor di Pesaro, but then she was the daughter of a father upon whom Heaven had bestowed a power to bind and to loose. This was no obstacle; when the betrothed was ready, the divorce was at hand. Alexander was too good a politician to allow his daughter to remain married to a son-in-law no longer of service to his interests.

Toward the end of August, it was reported that the legate, having terminated his embassy to the satisfaction of all, was on the point of returning to Rome. He did so about the 5th of September, nearly three months after the death of the Duke of Gandia; and on the morning of the sixth he went to the church Santa Maria Novella, from the entrance to which, according to custom, the cardinals and the ambassadors of Spain and Venice attended him on horseback to the Vatican, where he was received by the Pope, who, in compliance

with the ceremony, gave him his benediction and embraced him. Then, accompanied in the same manner as upon his entrance, he was reconducted to his apartments, whence, as soon as he was alone, he returned to those of the Pope; for in the consistory neither of them had spoken, and the Pope and his son had much to converse upon, — not, as might be supposed, relative to the death of the Duke of Gandia, for his name was never mentioned; and indeed from that hour he seemed to have been tacitly forgotten, as though he had never existed. It was rightly rumoured that Cesare was the bearer of good news; King Frederic consented to the proposed marriage; and consequently that of Sforza and Lucrezia was annulled for a simulated cause. He authorised also, the disinterment of the body of Djem, which to the Pope was of the value of three hundred thousand ducats.

Then, as Cesare had desired, it was he who succeeded to the influence of the Duke of Gandia with the Pope; and of this the Romans were soon aware. There was an endless succession of fêtes, balls, masquerades, and hunting parties, where Cesare, who began to lay aside his cardinal's robe, appeared in a French dress, followed like a king by the retinue of the papal court; so that the city was entirely given up to lewdness and debauchery, and had never been, says the Cardinal of Viterbo, even in the days of Nero or Heliogabalus, more disposed to sedition, more devoted to luxury, or more stained with murder. The number of robbers was so great, and such was their audacity, that it was dangerous to pass without the walls, unsafe to remain within them. Neither house nor palace was a defence; justice and law were fled. Gold, force, and pleasure governed Rome. And now, by the just retribution of Heaven,

Castle of San Angelo.

Photo-Etching. — From a Photograph.

Alexander and Cesare began to covet the fortunes of those even who, through their simony, had raised them to their present state. The first essay that they made in this new mode of coining money was upon the Cardinal of Cosenza.

A dispensation had been granted to the last heiress to the throne of Portugal, a professed nun, by virtue of which she had been married to a natural son of the late king. This marriage was extremely prejudicial to the interests of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain; they sent, therefore, ambassadors to Alexander, to complain of this proceeding, at the moment when the house of Aragon was about to contract an alliance with the Holy See. Alexander understood and resolved to rectify his error. He in consequence denied all knowledge of the brief, for the signature of which he had received 60,000 ducats, and accused the Bishop of Cosenza, secretary of the apostolic briefs, of having granted a forged dispensation. Upon this charge the archbishop was conveyed to the castle of San Angelo, and proceedings against him commenced. But as proof was not readily to be obtained, particularly if the archbishop persisted in his assertion that the dispensation was really the act of the Pope, they resolved to lay a snare, of the success of which there was no doubt.

One evening the archbishop saw the Cardinal Valentino enter his prison, with that open, affable, and sincere manner which he so well knew how to assume when it suited him. The cardinal frankly stated the embarrassments of the Pope, assured him that his Holiness felt that he alone, as his best friend, could relieve him from them. The archbishop replied that he was willing to act as his Holiness desired. Then Cesare, seating himself at the table upon which he had found

the captive leaning at his entrance, explained to him the position in which the Holy See was placed; it was sufficiently embarrassing. At the moment of contracting an alliance so important as that with the house of Aragon, they could not avow that for a few miserable ducats his Holiness had signed a dispensation which conferred upon the husband and the wife all legitimate rights to a crown upon which Ferdinand and Isabella had no other claims but that of conquest. The archbishop would then clearly understand what the Pope required; it was the mere avowal that he had taken upon himself to grant the dispensation. As the punishment of such an error would devolve upon Alexander, the archbishop might readily suppose that it would be truly paternal; and moreover, as the judgment and the recompense were in the same hands, while the judgment would be that of a father the reward would be that of a king. And this reward would be the appointment to be present, as legate, and with the rank of cardinal, at the marriage of Lucrezia and Alfonso.

The archbishop was well aware of the characters of the men with whom he had to deal; he knew they shrunk from no measures to obtain their ends. He knew they possessed a powder which had the taste and smell of sugar, of which it was impossible to ascertain the admixture in aliments, which caused death, slow or quick according as they desired, and without the slightest trace of its presence. He knew the secret of the poisoned key which the Pope kept by him, and that when his Holiness wished to rid himself of some one of his familiars, he desired him to open a certain wardrobe; but as the lock of this was difficult to turn, force was requisite before the bolt yielded, so that a small point in the handle of the key left a slight, but fatal, scratch

upon the hand. He knew also that Cesare wore a ring, composed of two lions' heads, the stone of which he turned inward when he wished to press the hand of a friend. It was then the lion's teeth became those of a viper; and the friend died cursing the villany of Borgia. Partly influenced by his fears, partly by the hope of recompense, the archbishop yielded, and Cesare returned to the Vatican possessed of the precious paper by which the Archbishop of Cosenza acknowledged he alone was guilty of the dispensation granted to the royal nun.

Two days after, by aid of the proofs which the archbishop had himself supplied, the Pope, in presence of the governor of Rome, the auditor of the apostolic chamber, and other judicial officers, pronounced his sentence, which condemned him to the loss of all his possessions, the degradation from all ecclesiastical orders, and the delivery over of his body to the civil power. Soon after, the civil magistrate arrived at the prison to fulfil his mission, accompanied by a registrar, two attendants, and four guards. The sentence was read, the attendants stripped the prisoner of his episcopal robes, and clothed him in a robe of coarse cloth, drawers of the same material, and heavy shoes. The guards then put him into one of the deepest dungeons of the castle of San Angelo, where he found for furniture a crucifix of wood, a table, a chair, and a bed; for recreation a lamp, Bible, and breviary; and for nourishment, two pounds of bread, and a small cask of water, which were to be renewed, as well as the oil for the lamp, every three days. At the expiration of a year the archbishop died of despair, after having gnawed his own arms in his agony.

The same day that he was thus consigned to his living

tomb, Cesare, who had so well managed this transaction, received from the Pope all the estates of the archbishop. Moreover, his perfidy in this respect had the desired effect: Isabella and Ferdinand could not impute to Alexander the signature of the dispensation, so that no further obstacle existed to the marriage of Lucrezia and Alfonso, — a matter of great satisfaction to the Pope, who thought now of increasing its importance by another union between Cesare Borgia and Donna Carlotta, daughter of Frederic.

Indeed, since the death of his brother, Cesare's actions had always indicated his aversion for the ecclesiastical profession, so that it caused no astonishment when, Alexander having one morning assembled the consistory, Cesare entered, and addressing the Pope, said that from his earliest youth his inclinations had ever been toward secular pursuits, and that it was only in obedience to the absolute commands of his Holiness that he had entered the Church, and had accepted the purple and his other dignities. That feeling at his age it was as unbecoming for him to yield to his desires as it was impossible to resist them, he humbly entreated his Holiness so to consider them that he might be permitted to resign the habit and the ecclesiastical dignity, — that he might re-enter the world and contract a lawful marriage.

At the same time he besought the cardinals to intercede for him with his Holiness, to whom he now resigned, of his free will, the churches, abbeys, and benefices, as well as all other dignities and gifts with which the Pope had endowed him. The cardinals remitted the decision to the Pope, and he, as a good father, unwilling to constrain the inclinations of his son, accepted his renunciation; Cesare therefore laid

aside his mantle, with which, says Tommaso Tommasi, he indeed had no affinity except that it was the colour of blood.

This renunciation was in fact urgent, and no time was to be lost. Charles VIII. on returning, heated and fatigued from the chase, had been struck by apoplexy soon after supper, and had died, leaving his throne to Louis XII. Alexander, always on the watch for every political change, saw at once the advantage he could gain from this circumstance, and was prepared to profit by any request the new king might be induced to prefer. Louis XII. was, in fact, in want of his temporal aid for his expedition against the duchy of Milan, and of his spiritual aid to dissolve the marriage with Jeanne, daughter of Louis XI., who was barren and horribly deformed, and whom he had married solely from fear of his father. Now, Alexander was willing to grant these, and moreover to raise his friend, George d'Amboise, to the cardinalship, if on his part the King of France would use his influence with his sister Donna Carlotta, to effect her marriage with his son. Negotiations to this end were already much advanced on the day when Cesare had laid aside the purple and assumed the secular dress, and then it was that the Seigneur de Villeneuve, envoy to King Louis XII., who was to conduct Cesare into France, arrived at Rome, and presented himself before the ex-cardinal, who during one month received and entertained him with all that luxury and flattering attention with which he so well could flatter those whose services he required; after which they departed, preceded by a courier of the Pope's, who ordered the different towns and cities through which they passed to receive them with every mark of honour and respect.

A similar order had been transmitted throughout France, where they provided the illustrious travellers with so numerous a guard, and the population so densely crowded to see them, that some of Cesare's suite wrote to Rome that in France they had seen neither trees, houses, nor walls, but only men, women, and the rays of the sun. The king, pretending to go to the chase, received his guest at two leagues from the city; and as he knew that Cesare liked the name of Valentino, which he had borne as cardinal, and still retained with the title of count, although he had resigned the archbishopric from which it had been derived, he granted to him the investiture of Valence, in Dauphiny, with the rank of duke, and a pension of twenty thousand francs; and after having made him this kingly present, and conversed with him for two hours, he departed, to allow Cesare time to arrange the splendid procession he had prepared for his entry into the city of Chinon.

His retinue consisted, first of twenty-four mules, covered with red caparisons, ornamented with escutcheons, bearing the arms of the duke, and laden with coffers and trunks, carved and incrusted with ivory and silver; then came twenty-four more, also in yellow and red caparisons, being the livery of the King of France; then, after these, ten others, covered with yellow satin, with red bars across it, and ten covered with striped gold-brocade, of which one stripe was of raised gold-thread, the other of smooth gold. Behind these came sixteen war-horses, led by as many esquires on foot; and these were followed by eighteen hunting-horses, ridden by eighteen pages, all between fourteen and fifteen years of age, sixteen of whom were clothed in crimson velvet, and two in fine gold-thread brocade. To these succeeded six handsome mules, all harnessed

in crimson velvet, led by six valets, clothed in velvet of the same colour. The third group consisted of two mules, entirely covered with cloth of gold, each carrying two coffers, in which were the treasures of the duke, the rich present he brought for his betrothed, and the relics and bulls that his father had charged him to deliver to his good friend Louis XII. They were followed by twenty gentlemen of his suite, clothed in gold and silver brocade, amongst whom were Paolo Giordano Orsino and many barons and knights. Then came two tambourines, a rebec, and four soldiers sounding silver trumpets and clarions; and then, surrounded by twenty-four lackeys, half of them in dresses of crimson velvet, the others in yellow silk, Messire George d'Amboise and the Duc de Valentinois, who was mounted upon a noble courser in a rich robe of red satin and of gold brocade, embroidered with pearls and precious stones. Around his cap was a double row of rubies, the size of beans, which cast so rich a glow that they realised the idea of those carbuncles we read of in the "Arabian Nights;" from his neck hung a collar valued at two hundred thousand francs; nor was there a point, even to his boots, that was not laced with gold twist, and embroidered with pearls. His horse was covered with a cuirass composed of leaves of gold, of the most admirable workmanship, enriched by bouquets of pearls and clusters of rubies. As a termination to this magnificent cortège, behind the duke came twenty-four mules, in rich red caparisons, with his arms; these bore the silver plate, tents, and baggage.

But that which bestowed on the cavalcade the appearance of exhaustless luxury was that all these mules and horses were shod with shoes of gold, so badly fastened that more than three fourths remained upon the road.—

an extravagance for which Cesare was highly censured, it being held an act of great indecorum to put beneath the feet of horses a metal of which the crowns of kings are made. Nevertheless, all this parade was thrown away upon her for whom it had been displayed, for when it was mentioned to Donna Carlotta that it was in the hope of winning her affections that Cesare had come into France, she replied that she would never marry a man who was not only a priest, but the son of a priest; not only an assassin, but the assassin of his brother; not only a man infamous by his birth, but still more infamous by his principles and actions.

In default of the fair Aragonese, Cesare found another princess, who accepted him; this was Mademoiselle d'Albret, daughter of the King of Navarre, who, on condition that the Pope would endow her with one hundred thousand ducats, and make her brother a cardinal, was married to him the 10th of May; and on the day of Pentecost ensuing the Duc de Valentinois received the order of St. Michael, first founded by Louis XII., and then the most valued decoration of the kingdom.

The announcement of this marriage, which cemented the alliance between Rome and Louis XII., was received with great joy by the Pope, who celebrated it with much pomp. On his part, Louis, besides the gratitude he felt toward the Pope for having divorced him from Jeanne of France, and authorised his marriage with Anne of Brittany, considered it indispensably requisite to have his Holiness for an ally, in furtherance of his plans upon Italy. He promised, therefore, the Duc de Valentinois that as soon as he should possess Milan, he would place three hundred lances at his command, whom he might use for his own purposes and against

any adversary, excepting always the allies of France; and this conquest would be undertaken when Louis had secured the support, or at least the neutrality of the Venetians, to whom he had sent envoys, empowered to promise in his name the cession of Cremona and of Ghiera d'Adda, upon his becoming master of Lombardy.

Every circumstance was favourable at this period to the foreign policy of Alexander VI., when he was obliged to withdraw his attention from France, and devote it exclusively to Florence. It was on this account: in Florence there was a man, without duchy, crown, or sword; possessing no other power but his genius, no other armour but his purity, no offensive weapon but his eloquence, and who was becoming more dangerous to him than could be all the kings, dukes, or princes of the earth; and this man was the poor Dominican, Girolamo Savonarola, — he who had refused absolution to Lorenzo de' Medici, because he was unwilling to restore liberty to his country. Girolamo Savonarola had predicted the French invasion of Italy, and Charles VIII. had conquered Naples; he had predicted to that monarch that, because he fulfilled not the liberative mission intrusted to him by God, he should be stricken by a great misfortune, and Charles VIII. had died; finally, like the man who daily paced the holy city, crying for eight days, "Woe to Jerusalem!" and on the ninth, "Woe unto myself!" — so had Savonarola predicted his own destruction. But the Florentine reformer was incapable of recoiling before his own danger; nor was he less resolved upon attacking the colossal abomination enthroned in the seat of St. Peter; so that every fresh debauch, which had been shamelessly paraded in the face of the day, or covered in the gloom of night, had been pointed at, and given up to

the execration of the people. Thus had he denounced the illicit connexion of Alexander with the beauteous Giulia Farnese; thus had he pursued with his maledictions the murder of the Duke of Gandia, — that fratricide caused by incestuous jealousy; and thus had he shown to his countrymen the lot which awaited them when the Borgias, lords of petty principalities, should attempt the conquest of duchies and republics.

To Alexander, Savonarola was at once a spiritual and temporal enemy, whom it was requisite to crush at any cost. Great, however, as was the power of the Pope, this was not easily to be effected. Savonarola, who preached the austere principles of liberty, had formed, even in rich and voluptuous Florence, a strong party, known as the Piangioni, or Penitents, consisting of citizens who, desirous at once of a reform in the Church and the republic, accused the Medici of having enslaved their country, and the Borgias of having shaken the foundations of faith, and demanded that the republic should revert to its popular principles, and religion to her primitive simplicity. They had already made great progress with regard to the first point; for, despite two powerful factions (that of the Arrabiati, or the "Enraged," which consisted of the noblest and most wealthy aristocratic youths of Florence, who desired an oligarchy, and that of the Bigi, or the "Grey," who designed the recall of the Medici, and were so called from their stealthy meetings), they had obtained by degrees an amnesty for all past political offences, the abolition of the Balia, an aristocratic privilege, the establishment of a council of eighteen hundred citizens, and the substitution of popular elections for nominations by lot, or at the pleasure of the oligarchy.

The first measure Alexander employed against the

increasing power of Savonarola was to declare him a heretic, and as such to interdict him the pulpit; but the monk eluded this by appointing Domenico Bonvicini of Pescia, his disciple and friend, to preach in his place. The only result was that the precepts of the master were uttered by another; and the seed, though scattered by a different hand, did not fall upon a less fertile soil. Moreover, Savonarola (offering to the future the example which Luther so advantageously followed when, twenty-two years afterwards, he burnt at Wittemberg the excommunication of Leo X.), weary at last of silence, had declared, upon the authority of Pope Pelagius, that an unjust excommunication was of itself inefficacious, and that he against whom it had been thus pronounced had not even need of absolution. He therefore announced, on Christmas-day, A. D. 1597, that the Lord had directed him to renounce the obedience of the servant, owing to the corruption of the master; and had thereupon resumed his duties in the cathedral church, with a success the greater because his discourses had been interrupted, and an influence the more formidable because it rested upon those sympathies which an unjust persecution invariably excites amongst the masses. Alexander upon this applied to Leonardo de' Medici, vicar of the archbishopric of Florence, who, in obedience to his orders, published a mandate forbidding the faithful to follow the ministry of Savonarola. By the terms of this rescript those who did so would be denied both confession and the communion, should they die, as infected with heresy; their bodies would be drawn upon a hurdle, and be deprived of the rites of sepulture. On the publication of this mandate, Savonarola appealed from his superior to the people and the senate, and by their united decision the episcopal

vicar received, early in 1498, an order to leave Florence within two hours.

This expulsion was a fresh triumph for Savonarola, and wishing to avail himself of his increasing influence as a means towards the improvement of public morals, he resolved to change the last day of the carnival, a day previously dedicated to earthly pleasures, into one of religious contrition. In consequence, on Shrove Tuesday a considerable number of children, having assembled before the cathedral, divided themselves into companies, and, traversing the city, went from house to house, demanding the profane books, sensual paintings, lutes, harps, cards, and dice, the cosmetics and perfumes, — in short, all those inventions and products of a corrupt state of society by means of which Satan weans the heart of man from the ordinances of God. And the inhabitants of Florence, obeying this injunction, came to the Duomo, bearing all these instruments of perdition, which soon formed an immense pile, to which the youthful reformers set fire, singing at the same time hymns and religious psalms. Many copies of Boccaccio, of the "Morgante Maggiore," and several pictures by Fra Bartolomeo were then destroyed; and from that hour the genius of the artist was consecrated entirely to the conception and expression of religious subjects. A reform of this description was fearful for Alexander. He resolved, therefore, to assault Savonarola by the aid of the weapon with which he was attacked, — by eloquence. He selected for this purpose a preacher of acknowledged ability, named François de Pouille, and sent him to Florence, where he preached in the church della Santa Croce, and accused Savonarola of heresy and impiety. Moreover, at the same time he declared by a new brief that if the senate did not

silence the heresiarch, the property of the Florentine merchants situated within the papal territory would be sequestered, and an interdict laid upon the republic, as a declared enemy to the Church.

The senate, abandoned by France, and witnessing the fearful increase of the Pope's temporal power, was now obliged to give way, and intimated to Savonarola its desire upon the point. Savonarola obeyed, and addressed his audience for the last time in a discourse replete with eloquence and dignified resolution. But his retreat, instead of subduing, increased the excitement; people spoke of his prophecies and their fulfilment; and the disciples, more ardent than their master, ascending from inspiration to miraculous powers, asserted that Savonarola had offered to descend into the tombs of the cathedral with his antagonist, and there, as a solemn proof of the truth of his doctrine, to resuscitate a dead body, promising to admit his errors if his antagonist performed the miracle. Rumours of this assertion reached François de Pouille, and he being one of those impassioned men who reckon life as nothing when its sacrifice can advance their cause, declared that he acknowledged, in deep humility, that he was too miserable a sinner to suppose that God would accord him such a measure of grace as to perform a miracle; but he offered another proof, — to enter with Savonarola into a burning pile. He knew, he said, that he should perish, but he felt that he should die in vindicating the cause of religion, since he was certain to destroy also the tempter who had seduced the souls of so many, with his own, to eternal damnation.

The proposal of Brother François was reported to Savonarola, but as he had not originated the first defiance, he hesitated upon accepting the second; where-

upon his disciple, Domenico Bonvicini, more confident than his master as to the extent of his spiritual power, declared that he was willing to accept the ordeal on his own behalf, assured that God would work a miracle at the intercession of his prophet. Immediately a rumour was spread throughout the city that the challenge was accepted, and the partisans of Savonarola, all zealots, had not the slightest misgiving as to the triumph of their cause. His enemies were overjoyed to witness the self-sacrifice of a heretic; and the indifferent regarded the trial proposed as a spectacle of the most exciting interest. But this devotion of Brother Bonvicini of Pescia did not answer the purpose of Brother François de Pouille; he was perfectly willing to die even in so terrible a way, but upon condition that Savonarola should die with him. And indeed, of what consequence to him was the death of an obscure disciple like Bonvicini? It was the master it was requisite to strike, — the high priest of the doctrine whom he desired to hurry with him in his fall. He declared then that he would not ascend the pile unless with Savonarola, and that, playing so fearful a game in his own person, he never would agree that his adversary might play it by proxy. Upon this an unexpected event took place, for instead of Brother François de Pouille, who would not contend but with the master, two Franciscans offered to combat with the disciple. These were brothers Nicolas de Pilly and André Rondinelli. Upon seeing this reinforcement brought to their antagonists, the partisans of Savonarola presented themselves in crowds to dare the fiery trial. The Franciscans on their part were unwilling to retreat, — and thus the fervour of both was daily more excited.

Florence now had all the appearance of a great mad-

house; every one wished for the pile, all desired to enter into its flames; the shout of defiance was no longer limited to the men, but was echoed by women and children, vehemently demanding to undergo the ordeal. At last the senate, reserving the rights of the first combatants, ordered that this strange duel should take place between only Bonvicini and Rondinelli, and ten citizens were appointed to arrange the proceedings; the day fixed upon was the 7th April, 1498, and the place, the square before the palace.

The citizens selected discharged their task very faithfully. A scaffold was erected on the place appointed; it was five feet high, ten broad, and seventy-four feet long. Through this, which was completely covered with fagots and heather, and enclosed by rails made of the driest wood they could procure, two paths, two feet each in breadth, and seventy long, were constructed, the entrance to both being in the Loggia de' Lanzi, and the outlet at the opposite extremity. The Loggia was divided by a partition; thus each champion had a kind of apartment in which to prepare himself for action, as at a theatre every actor has his dressing-room; but here the tragedy to be performed was no fiction. The Franciscans arrived and occupied the place appointed for them, without the slightest religious demonstration. Not so Savonarola; he on the contrary appeared in procession, clothed in his sacerdotal robes, and holding in his hands the host, exposed to the view of all, being enclosed in a tabernacle of crystal. The hero of this scene, Domenico of Pescia, followed with a crucifix; next to him the Dominicans, each holding a red cross in his hand, and singing psalms; after these the principal citizens of their party, carrying torches, so certain of the triumph of their cause that they wished them-

selves to set fire to the pile. As for the place itself — it was a dense mass of human life, the overflowing of which filled all the streets adjacent; at every door and window heads were seen in regular gradation, one row above another; every housetop was crowded; even the roof of the Duomo and of the cupola was studded with spectators.

However, as the trial drew nigh, the Franciscans raised such difficulties that it was clear their champion's resolution was failing. They first expressed their fear that Bonvicini was an enchanter, and as such was provided with some secret talisman or charm, which would protect him against the flames. They required, therefore, that he should be stripped of the clothes he then wore in exchange for others to be examined by them. To this Bonvicini made no opposition. Next, observing that Savonarola had placed in his hands the host, they exclaimed it was an act of profanation to expose it to the flames; that it was not included in the terms; and that unless Bonvicini renounced this supernatural aid, they would forego the trial. Savonarola replied that it could be no matter of surprise that the champion of the true faith, having placed his trust in God, should carry in his hands that God from whom he expected his salvation. This reply was unsatisfactory to the Franciscans, who would not swerve from their demands. Savonarola, on his side, was inflexible; thus four hours passed away in fruitless discussion.

In the mean time the populace, crowded together from the break of day, suffering from hunger and thirst, betrayed their impatience in such murmurs that the partisans of Savonarola, still confident of victory, implored him to yield the points in dispute. Savonarola answered that were he himself about to undergo

the ordeal, he would readily comply; but since another was to be exposed to danger, he could not be too circumspect. Two hours more were spent, his partisans vainly endeavouring to overcome his refusal. At last, as night was closing in, the murmurs for a long time heard became so menacing that Bonvicini declared he was ready to pass through the burning pile with only the crucifix in his hands. This it was impossible to refuse; Rondinelli yielded, and it was announced that the terms were agreed upon, and that the ordeal would immediately take place. Upon this the excitement of the populace died away; but at the moment when the torches were applied, and the smoke and flames of the pile arose, a storm, which had long been gathering, burst over Florence with such force that these were instantly extinguished, and the pile made incapable of being relit. The populace now considered themselves tricked; enthusiasm was converted into contempt; and, not knowing from which side the difficulties that retarded the ordeal had proceeded, they threw the blame upon both.

The senate, foreseeing the disorder that would ensue, commanded the crowds to disperse; but no attention was paid to this, and the people, notwithstanding the rain, awaited the departure of the two champions. Rondinelli was conducted home, pursued by hootings and a shower of stones. Savonarola, through respect to his sacerdotal robes and the host that he bore in his hands, passed quietly through the crowds, — a miracle hardly less remarkable than if he had traversed unhurt the flames of the pile! But it was the sacred host which had protected him whom they regarded from that hour as a false prophet; and it was with great regret that the mob, excited by the Arrabiati, who had long

proclaimed Savonarola to be a liar and a hypocrite, had allowed his return to the convent unmolested. On the morrow, therefore, which was Palm Sunday, when he appeared in the pulpit to explain his conduct, he was unable, amid insults, hisses, and jeers, to obtain a moment's hearing. The cries, at first of derision, soon became menacing; and Savonarola, unable, owing to the weakness of his voice, to control the tumult, quitted the pulpit and retired into the sacristy, from which he retreated to his convent, where he shut himself up in his cell. At this instant a cry was heard, caught, and repeated immediately by all around: "To St. Mark's! To St. Mark's!" and this party of insurgents was recruited as it traversed the streets by a vast multitude, who rushed on, like a rising tide, to level the walls of the convent. The gates, closed as they approached, soon crashed beneath their resistless force; and Savonarola and his two adepts, Bonvicini and Maruffi, arrested in their cells, were conveyed to prison amid the insults of the populace, who, ever in the extreme of enthusiasm or hatred, would have torn them in pieces, and were restrained only by the assurance that the magistracy would compel the prisoners to undergo the ordeal which they had avoided. Alexander VI., although not present, had not been, as may be supposed, an uninfluential party to this rapid and strange apostasy; and no sooner was he apprised of the arrest and fall of Savonarola than he reclaimed him as a subject of ecclesiastical authority.

But notwithstanding the indulgences with which the Pope accompanied this demand, the senate insisted that the trial of Savonarola should take place at Florence; but, to avoid all appearance of a desire to withdraw the accused from the papal authority, requested the Pope to

add two ecclesiastical judges to the Florentine tribunal. Alexander, perceiving he could obtain no further concession, consented, and deputed Joachimo Turriano of Venice, and Francesco Ramolini, — provided beforehand with the decree that pronounced Savonarola and his accomplices heretics, schismatics, persecutors of the holy Church, and misleaders of the people. After all, this apparent firmness of the Florentines in the maintenance of their rights was but an empty exhibition; for in fact the tribunal was packed, and consisted of eight of the most unscrupulous enemies of Savonarola. His trial was preceded by torture; feeble in body, of a nervous, irritable constitution, Savonarola had been unable to endure the torture of the cord, and, overcome by pain (at the moment when, hoisted up by the wrists, the executioner had suddenly let him fall within two feet of the ground), had confessed, in the hope of some mitigation, that his prophecies were but simple conjectures. It is true that on re-entering his prison he had protested against this confession, asserting that his physical weakness and his inability to endure torture had wrung it from him; but that the truth was, the Lord had oftentimes appeared to him in his trances, and had inspired what he had foretold. This led to a repetition of the torture, during which Savonarola again yielded, and admitted what he had retracted.

But hardly unbound, with every limb yet quivering beneath the rack, he declared that his confession was the work of his tormentors, and would recoil upon their heads; but that, for himself, he again protested against all past and future admissions on his part. For a third time, torture wrung from him the same confession, and repose brought its retractation; so that at last his judges, after having condemned him and his disciples to the

flames, decided that his confession should not be read publicly at the pile, being assured that if it were, then even as before he would deny it aloud, — a circumstance which might be, considering the fickleness of public opinion, productive of the very worst results. On the 23rd of May the funeral pile, so long promised, was reconstructed before the palace; and now the multitude reassembled, confident that they would not be this time deprived of a spectacle for which they had so long yearned. Accordingly, toward eleven o'clock, Girolamo Savonarola, Domenico Bonvicini, and Selvestre Maruffi were brought to the place of execution; and, being first degraded from their rank by the ecclesiastical judges, were bound in the centre of an immense pile of wood, all three to the same stake. Then the Bishop Pagnanoli declared to the condemned that he separated them forever from the Church. "From the militant!" replied Savonarola, who from that hour, owing to his martyrdom, entered into the glories of the church triumphant. This was all the victims uttered; for at that moment an Arrabiato, a personal enemy of Savonarola, breaking through the line formed by the guards around the scaffold, snatched a torch from the hands of the executioner, and set fire to the four corners of the pile. When the smoke arose, Savonarola and his disciples began to sing a psalm; and still, when wrapped in the devouring flames, the solemn strain was heard, which ascended to open for their souls an entrance through the gates of heaven.

Portrait of Girolamo Savonarola.

Photo-Etching. — From original Etching by William Unger.

UNIV OF MICH.

CHAPTER VI.

THUS freed from the most dangerous enemy that as yet had ever risen against him, Alexander VI. nevertheless pursued the condemned with unrelenting vengeance even after death. Yielding to his importunity, the senate gave orders that the ashes of the prophet and of his disciples should be thrown into the Arno; but some half-burnt bones were notwithstanding treasured up by the very soldiers whose duty it was to keep back the populace from the pile, and these sacred relics are exposed even now, all blackened with the flames, to the adoration of the faithful, who, if they regard Savonarola no longer as a prophet, yet at least revere him as a martyr.

The French army in the mean time were preparing once more to cross the Alps, under the command of Jacques Trivulce. Louis XII. had proceeded as far as Lyons to accompany Cesare Borgia, and Giuliano della Rovere, — whom he had contrived to reconcile with each other, — and at the beginning of May had pushed forward his advanced guard, which the main body soon followed. The king's forces consisted of sixteen hundred lances, five thousand Swiss, four thousand Gascons, and three thousand five hundred foot-soldiers, levies raised from every district of France. On the 13th of August the army, amounting to nearly fifteen thousand men, which was to combine its movements with those of the Venetians, arrived before the walls of Arezzo, to which it immediately laid siege. The position of

Ludovico Sforza was hopeless; he now suffered the punishment of his imprudence in inviting the French to invade Italy; every ally abandoned him, either on account of their own more pressing interests, or intimidated by the powerful enemy he had raised up. Maximilian, who had promised to send him four hundred lances, instead of renewing hostilities against Louis, had concluded a treaty with the Circle of Suabia to attack the Swiss, whom he had declared rebels to the Empire.

The Florentines, who had promised to provide him three hundred men-at-arms, and two thousand infantry, on condition that he should aid them in the reduction of Pisa, had retracted their engagement, at the threats of Louis XII., and had agreed to remain neutral. Lastly, Frederic reserved his troops for his own dominions, for he reasonably concluded that, Milan taken, he should have again to defend Naples; and notwithstanding his engagements, withheld all succour, both in men and money. Ludovico Sforza, thus thrown entirely upon his own resources, gave orders for the immediate fortification of Annone, Novara, and Alexandria; sent Cajazzo to that part of the Milanese which borders on the States of Venice; and collected on the Po the remainder of his army. But all these measures were useless, opposed to the impetuous attack of the French. In a few days Arezzo, Annone, Novara, Voghiera, Castelnuovo, Ponte-Corona, Tortona, and Alexandria were taken, and Trivulce advanced upon Milan.

Upon this, Ludovico, despairing of maintaining his capital, resolved to retreat into Germany, with his children, his brother Ascanio, and his treasures, which in eight years had decreased from the value of fifteen hundred thousand to two hundred thousand ducats.

But before his departure he left the defence of the castle of Milan to Bernardino da Corte. In vain did his friends advise distrust of this man; in vain did Ascanio offer to defend the castle to the last extremity. Ludovico was inflexible; he quitted Milan on September 2, leaving in the citadel three thousand foot-soldiers, and a sufficiency of provisions, and supplies of arms and money to maintain a siege of several months. Two days after his departure the French entered Milan. Ten days later, before a shot was fired, Bernardino da Corte surrendered the citadel. Twenty-one days had been sufficient to enable the French to take possession of the towns, capital, citadel, and territories of their opponent.

Louis received at Lyons the news of the success of his troops, and departed instantly for Milan, where he was welcomed with the sincerest demonstrations of joy. All ranks of citizens came three miles beyond the walls to welcome him; and forty children, clothed in gold-brocade and silk, preceded him, singing hymns written by poets of the day, which hailed the king as a liberator, and the messenger of liberty. This welcome of the Milanese was caused by a rumour which the partisans of Louis XII. had industriously spread, that the King of France was sufficiently wealthy to abolish all taxes. These, indeed, he slightly reduced upon the morning of his entry; distinguished also by his favours many Milanese gentlemen; and gave to Trivulce, as a reward for this rapid and glorious campaign, the city of Vigavano.

Meanwhile Cesare Borgia, who had followed Louis XII., to win either the hound's fee or the hawk's reward in Italy, no sooner saw the king's object accomplished than he reminded him of his promise, which,

with his proverbial good faith, the king hastened to fulfil. He placed, therefore, immediately at Cesare's disposal three hundred lances, commanded by Yves d'Alègre, and four thousand Swiss, to enable him to subdue the vicars of the Church. We must explain whom we mean by this expression.

During the long contests of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, and the exile of the Popes at Avignon, the greater number of the cities and fortresses of the Romagna had been conquered or usurped by a multitude of petty tyrants, who, for the most part, had received from the empire the investiture of their possessions; but since the German influence had declined, and the Popes had again made Rome the centre of the Christian world, all these petty princes, deprived of their original support, had rallied round the Holy See, and had again received the investiture from the pontiffs, paying an annual tenure-due, on account of which they enjoyed the titles of dukes, counts, or lords, and the general denomination of vicars of the Church.

Now it had been easy for Alexander, upon a rigid examination of the acts and deeds of each of these vassals, to pick out some slight infraction of the agreement between them and their liege lord. He had, therefore, made a formal presentation of his grievances before a tribunal specially appointed, and had obtained a decision in his favour, by which the vicars of the Church, as having broken their engagements, were deprived of their domains, which henceforth reverted to the Holy See; but as the Pope had to do with men against whom it was far more easy to pronounce judgment than to execute it, he had appointed as his captain-general, and with permission to reconquer their territories on his own account, his son, the Duc de

Valentinois. The vicars-general were the Malatesti of Rimini, the Sforzas of Pesaro, the Manfredi of Faenza, the Riarii of Imola and Forti, the Varani of Camerino, the Montefeltri of Urbino, and the Gaëtani of Sermoneta. The Duc de Valentinois, for the purpose of still more increasing the friendship which his relative and ally, Louis XII., evinced toward him, had remained at Milan during the period of his residence in that city; but at the expiration of a month, the king having departed for France, he gave orders to his troops to await his arrival between Parma and Modena, and went in the mean while to Rome to lay his future plans before his father, and to receive his final instructions.

He found upon his arrival that his sister Lucrezia had acquired a great accession of wealth and power during his absence, not by means of her husband, Alfonso, whose future prospects, owing to the successes of Louis, were now most doubtful, — a circumstance which had already caused a great coolness between him and Alexander, — but from the liberality of her father, over whom at this period she exercised an influence more surprising than ever. In fact, Lucrezia Borgia of Aragon had been declared possessor for life of Spoleto and its duchy, with all the rights and emoluments thereunto depending, — a dignity which had so increased and ennobled her position that she now never appeared in public but with a retinue of two hundred horses, ridden by the most illustrious ladies and the noblest cavaliers of Rome. Moreover, as the very peculiar affection of her father for Lucrezia was no secret, the greatest prelates of the Church, the *habitués* of the Vatican, the intimates of his Holiness, had become her humblest servants, insomuch that cardinals pressed around to assist her when she dismounted from her

horse, and archbishops were jealous of the honour of performing mass in her apartments.

It had been requisite, however, for Lucrezia to leave Rome to take possession of her new dominions; but as the Pope could not long endure the absence of his daughter, he resolved to add to his other donation the city of Nepi, formerly bestowed for his vote upon Ascanio Sforza. Ascanio had necessarily forfeited this city by his adherence to his brother's fortunes; and as the Pope was now proceeding thither, he invited his daughter to accompany him, and be present at the festivals consequent upon its reversion to the Holy See. The eagerness which Lucrezia showed to comply with her father's wishes was rewarded by an additional gift, of the city and territory of Sermoneta, which belonged to the Gaëtini. It is true that at present his intention in this respect was not divulged, inasmuch as it was first requisite to get rid of the two possessors of the territory; one being Giacomo Gaëtano, the apostolic prothonotary, the other, a youth of great expectations, Prospero Gaëtano; but as they resided at Rome, utterly unsuspicious, the first believing that by his position, and the second, that by his courage, they were both high in the estimation of his Holiness, the difficulty in both cases appeared extremely trifling. In fact, as soon as Alexander had returned to Rome, under pretext of some recently discovered crime, Giacomo was arrested, imprisoned in the castle of San Angelo, and there poisoned; and Prospero Gaëtano was strangled in his own house. Owing to these deaths, — so sudden that neither had been enabled to make a will, — the Pope declared their property to devolve upon the apostolic chamber, which sold them to Lucrezia for eighty thousand crowns, a sum which the Pope returned to his

daughter on the morning of its receipt. Thus, whatever his haste, Cesare found upon his arrival at Rome that the Pope already had preceded him in the path of conquest.

The position of another relative had also greatly advanced during Cesare's residence in France; it was that of Giovanni, nephew of the Pope, who to the hour of his death had been one of the most faithful friends of the Duke of Gandia. It was said, indeed, that he owed the favours which his Holiness heaped upon him, less to the memory of the brother, than the protection of the sister. There were two reasons which made Giovanni particularly obnoxious to Cesare, and it was whilst secretly resolving not to allow him a long possession of the dignity, that the Duc de Valentinois heard that his cousin had just been appointed cardinal *à latere* of all the Christian world, and had quitted Rome to visit the papal States, with a suite of archbishops, and other dignitaries and knights, that might have done honour to the Pope.

Cesare remained but three days at Rome; then, collecting all the forces his Holiness could spare, rejoined his army at Euza, and marched immediately upon Imola, which, abandoned by its owners, who had retired to Forli, was obliged to yield; whereupon Cesare advanced on Forli. Here a determined resistance checked his further progress, and this was owing to the courage and noble bearing of a woman. Catherine Sforza, widow of Girolamo, and mother of Ottaviano Riario, had shut herself up in this city, and had excited and maintained the courage of the garrison, by placing herself and possessions under its protection. Cesare saw that nothing was to be gained here by a *coup de main*, but that he must apply himself to a regularly conducted siege. He

made, therefore, the necessary arrangements, and, erecting a battery against the point where the walls appeared to him most defenceless, he desired his artillery to maintain a heavy fire until a breach was effected. Returning from giving these orders, he found in his camp his cousin Giovanni, who, proceeding from Ferrara toward Rome, was unwilling to pass so near without visiting the duke. Cesare welcomed him with the sincerest joy, detained him for three days, and on the fourth invited all his officers and courtiers to a farewell banquet, and, having delivered to his cousin some despatches for the Pope, he took leave of him with all those marks of affection which had greeted his arrival.

The cardinal had started for Rome on quitting the table, but on reaching Urbino, he found himself seized by so strange and sudden an indisposition that he was obliged to remain there. Rallying a little, however, after a short time he resumed his journey; yet scarcely had he arrived at Roaca Contrada when he was again so ill that he resolved to proceed no farther. Feeling himself again better and hearing that Forli was taken, and Catherine Sforza a prisoner, he thought of returning to felicitate Cesare upon his victory; but at Fossombrone, although he had substituted a litter for his carriage, he was constrained to stop for the third time, and the last; three days afterward he was dead. His body was conveyed to Rome, and buried without pomp in the church of Santa Maria del Popolo, near the grave of his friend, the Duke of Gandia, — and, notwithstanding his high rank, without this event exciting more attention than if the youthful cardinal had never existed; for thus silently disappeared everything borne away by the awful current of the ambition of that terrible trinity, — Alexander, Cesare, and Lucrezia.

Almost at the same time Rome was terrified by another murder. Don Giovanni Cerviglione, a gentleman by birth, and a brave soldier, captain of the men-at-arms of his Holiness, on returning from supping with Don Eliseo Pignatelli, a knight of St. John, was attacked by sbirri, one of whom demanded his name, and on his reply, seeing that he was not mistaken, stabbed him instantly in his breast, whilst another, with a back stroke of his sword, struck off his head, which rolled at the feet of the body, even before it fell.

The governor of Rome complained of this assassination to the Pope, but perceiving by the manner of his Holiness that he had acted unwisely, and that silence would have been more prudent, he stopped the inquiries he had commenced, so that the murderers were never arrested; only it was rumoured at Rome that during Cesare's short residence there he had obtained an interview with the wife of Cerviglione, who was a Borgia, and that her husband being made acquainted with this fact, was so excited as even to threaten both her and her paramour; and that this had been reported to Cesare, who, calling Michelotto to his aid, had from Forli extended the arm which struck Cerviglione in the midst of Rome.

Another death followed so unexpectedly and immediately upon that of Don Cerviglione that rumour did not fail to attribute it, if not to the same cause, at least to the same source. Monsignor Agnelli, of Mantua, Archbishop of Cosenza, clerk of the chamber, and vice-legate of Viterbo, having fallen, without any known reason, under the displeasure of his Holiness, was poisoned at his own table, where, whilst death glided secretly through his veins, he had spent a great portion

of the night in animated conversation with three or four guests, and retiring in full health, he was discovered in the morning lying a corpse in his bed. His possessions were subjected to a threefold division: his lands and houses became the property of the Duc de Valentinois; Francesco Borgia, son of Pope Calixtus III., obtained his bishopric; and the place of clerk of the apostolic chamber was sold for five thousand ducats to Ventura Benassai, a Siennese merchant, who, upon payment of the sum into the hands of Alexander, came on the same day to reside at the Vatican. This last death decided also a point upon which hitherto much uncertainty had prevailed. The heirs of Monsignor Agnelli not submitting to their disinheritance without a murmur, and making some attempts to prevent it, Alexander published a brief, depriving all cardinals and priests of the right and power of bequest, and declaring also that the possessions of the archbishop had now reverted to the Holy See.

In the mean time Cesare's victories had received a sudden check. By means of the two hundred thousand ducats yet in his possession, Ludovico Sforza had raised five thousand Burgundians and eight thousand Swiss infantry, with which he had re-entered Lombardy. Trivulce, therefore, had been compelled, in order to oppose the enemy, to recall Yves d'Alègre, and the troops that Louis had placed at the command of Cesare; and he consequently, leaving a part of the papal troops in garrison at Imola and Forli, returned with the rest to Rome. Alexander was desirous that his entry should be considered as a triumph; and, hearing that the quartermasters of the army were but a few miles from the city, he sent messengers, inviting the several ambassadors, princes, cardinals, prelates, Roman barons, and

municipal authorities, to proceed to meet the Duc de Valentinois, with all their retinue; and, as the baseness of those who yield is always greater than the pride of those who command, his orders were not only obeyed, but exceeded.

The entry of Cesare took place the 26th of February, 1500; and although the jubilee was at its height, the festival of the carnival commenced nevertheless on the morrow, far more noisy and licentious than ever. Under pretence of a masquerade, and as if determined to assume the glory, the genius, and success of the great man whose name he bore, he resolved to represent the triumphs of Cæsar in the Piazza Navone, which was ordinarily reserved for the festivities of the carnival. He set out, therefore, from this spot, and traversed the streets of Rome with the costume and chariots of the ancients, standing erect in his car, arrayed in the purple of the emperors, his head crowned with the golden laurel, and surrounded by lictors, soldiers, and standard-bearers, whose flags bore this device, *Aut Cæsar, aut nihil!*

On the last Sunday in Lent the Pope conferred upon him that dignity which had so long been the object of his ambition. Cesare was declared general and *gonfalonier* of the holy Church. Meanwhile Sforza had crossed the Alps and the Lake of Como, amid the acclamations of his former subjects, who no longer cherished the enthusiasm which the French army and the promises of Louis XII. had first excited. These demonstrations were so very unequivocal that Trivulce, considering that the position of the French garrison at Milan was insecure, withdrew it toward Novara. The result proved the correctness of his opinion; for no sooner did the Milanese perceive the preparations for

his departure than a general excitement prevailed, and the streets were filled with armed men. It was requisite to cut through the still increasing crowd, with sword in hand and lance in rest; and hardly had the French cleared the gates when the people inundated the open country, following their retreat with hootings and cries to the banks of the Tesino.

Trivulce left at Novara four hundred lances, and more than three thousand Swiss, that Yves d'Alègre had brought to him from the Romagna, and advanced with the remainder of his army to Mortara, where he halted until he should be joined by the reinforcements he had required from Louis. Ludovico Sforza and his brother Ascanio in the mean while had entered Milan, amid the acclamations of the city. No time was lost by either; and, availing themselves of the present enthusiasm in their behalf, Ascanio undertook the siege of the citadel, whilst Ludovico passed the Tesino, to attack Novara. The besiegers and besieged were now fellow-countrymen, for Yves d'Alègre had barely three hundred French, and Ludovico five hundred Italians.

The truth was that for six years the Swiss had formed the infantry of Europe, and, money in hand, all the continental powers had raised their levies from their mountains. The rude descendants of William Tell, thus put up at auction by nations, and led by their various engagements from their bleak and barren mountains to the most beautiful and productive countries, even whilst maintaining their ancient courage, had now lost, by contact with foreigners, that firmness of principle which had caused them to be so long cited as models of honour and of good faith, and had degenerated into a kind of merchandise, always ready to sell themselves, without the slightest hesitation, to the highest bidder.

The French were the first sufferers from a venality which subsequently became so fatal to Ludovico Sforza. For the Swiss garrison of Novara having contrived an intercourse with those of their countrymen who formed the outposts of the ducal army, and understanding that the latter, who as yet were unacquainted with the exhaustion of the finances of Ludovico, were better kept and paid than themselves, engaged to surrender the city and to enlist under the Milanese colours, on condition of receiving the same pay. This offer, as may be supposed, Ludovico readily accepted. Novara, the citadel excepted, was given up, and the enemy was recruited by three thousand men. But instead of immediately marching with his reinforcement upon Mortara, Ludovico committed the error of besieging the citadel of Novara. The consequence was that Louis XII., apprised of the dangers of his position, through the courier despatched by Trivulce, had hastened the departure of the French troops, and directed Cardinal d'Amboise to station himself at Asto, and hurry forward the recruitment of the army. The cardinal found here already a division of three thousand men; La Trémouille brought him fifteen hundred lances, and six thousand French infantry; the Bailli of Dijon arrived with six thousand Swiss, so that, together with the troops Trivulce had under him at Mortara, Louis XII. was at the head of the finest army that a king of France had ever raised and sent into the plains beyond the Alps. By a skilful march, before even Ludovico was aware of its being assembled or of its strength, this army threw itself suddenly between Novara and Milan, cutting off from the duke all communication with his capital; and, in spite of his inferiority, he was consequently obliged to prepare for an immediate engagement.

But whilst both parties were preparing for a decisive action, the Diet, informed that the hired troops of the same cantons were about to slaughter each other, sent an order to the Swiss serving in both armies to annul their engagements and return home. Moreover, during the two months' interval between the surrender of Novara and the arrival of the French army before that city, affairs had greatly changed, owing to the exhausted state of Ludovico's finances. Fresh conferences had taken place at the outposts, and this time, by favour of the money sent by Louis XII., it was the Swiss in the service of the King of France who found themselves better kept and paid than their compatriots. These honourable Helvetians, since they no longer fought for liberty, knew too well the value of their blood to suffer one drop to be shed, if that drop were not paid for in gold; the result was, those who had betrayed Yves d'Alègre did not hesitate to deceive Ludovico, and whilst the recruits raised by the Bailli of Dijon, notwithstanding the injunctions of the Diet, remained faithful to the French colours, the auxiliaries of Ludovico declared that in fighting against them they would be considered as guilty of rebellion, and would expose themselves to a punishment which the immediate receipt of their pay, now due, could alone induce them to incur.

The duke, who had spent his very last ducat, and was cut off from his capital, to which victory alone could open him the way, promised not only the pay that was due them, but twice its amount, if they would but join him in a final effort. This promise was unfortunately contingent upon the doubtful chances of a battle; the Swiss declared they loved their countrymen too much to think of shedding their blood without their pay, and

revered the Diet too much to disobey its orders; and that therefore Sforza must not longer rely upon them, inasmuch as they had decided upon immediately returning to their cantons. The duke, perceiving that everything was lost, made a last appeal to their honour, and besought them at least to insure his personal safety in the capitulation they were about to make. But they replied that such a clause would render the capitulation, if not impossible, at least void of those advantages they had a right to expect, and upon which they reckoned as compensation for their arrears of pay. Yet as if they were at last moved by his entreaties, they offered to conceal him under their uniform and in their ranks.

This proposal was purposely illusory. Sforza was old, and short of stature, and could not escape recognition amidst men the eldest of whom was not thirty, and the shortest not less than five feet six inches high. But it was his last resource, and without entirely rejecting it he sought by its modification to use it with success. He disguised himself, therefore, as a Franciscan friar, and, mounted upon a horse of inferior quality, passed himself off for their chaplain. Galeas de San Severino, who commanded under him, and his two brothers, being tall, assumed the uniform of the soldiers, hoping thus to escape unobserved in the Swiss ranks. They had hardly done so when the duke heard that a capitulation had been signed between Trivulce and the Swiss; but no stipulation being made for the safety of the duke, or for that of his officers, they were obliged, as their only chance of escape, to trust to their disguise.

The army began to defile, but the Swiss, after having made money by their blood, now thought to sell their honour. The French received information of the concealment of Sforza and his generals in their ranks; they

were all recognised, and Sforza was taken by La Trémouille himself. It was said the price paid for this act of treason was the city of Bellinzona, which belonged to the French, but which the Swiss seized upon in their retreat, without any effort being made by Louis XII. for its repossession.

When Ascanio Sforza, who had remained at Milan, heard of this base desertion and betrayal of his brother, he resolved upon flight before, through one of those sudden changes so familiar to the populace, he should be made prisoner by the former subjects of his brother, to whom the idea might occur to purchase their pardon at the price of his liberty. He escaped, therefore, by night, accompanied by the principal chiefs of the Ghibelline nobility, and took the road to Plazenza, to regain the kingdom of Naples. Upon reaching Rivolta, he remembered that a friend of his youth, and one upon whom in the days of his power he had conferred much wealth, resided there; and as both himself and his companions were extremely fatigued, he resolved to solicit his hospitality for the night.

Conrad received them with the liveliest joy, and placed his house and servants at his disposal; but scarcely had they retired to rest, when he sent a courier to Plazenza, to acquaint Carlo Orsino, who commanded the Venetian garrison, that he was ready to deliver up the Cardinal Ascanio and the principal chiefs of the Milanese army. Orsino, unwilling to trust another with a matter of so much importance, set out immediately with twenty-five horsemen, and, surrounding the house, entered the room in which Ascanio and his companions slept, who, thus surprised, surrendered themselves without resistance. They were conducted to Venice, and subsequently delivered up to Louis, who now detained as prisoners Ludovico and

Ascanio; a legitimate nephew of the great Francesco Sforza, whose name was Hermes; two natural sons, Alexander and Contino; and lastly, Francesco, son of the unfortunate Giovanni Galeasso, who had been poisoned by his uncle.

Louis XII., resolved to crush the family at one blow, forced Francesco to enter into a convent, threw Contino, Alexander, and Hermes into prison, confined Ascanio in the tower of Bourges, and lastly, after transferring the unhappy Ludovico from the fortress of Pierre Encise to the Lys St. George, he consigned him definitively to the castle of Loches, where he died after a captivity of ten years, regretting to the last hour of his life the moment when, misled by his ambition, he had paved the way for the invasion of Italy by the French.

The news of the fall of Ludovico and of his family caused the greatest joy at Rome, for, consolidating the power of the French in the Milanese, it established also that of the Holy See in the Romagna, since no further obstacles existed to the conquests meditated by Cesare. The couriers, therefore, who brought the news were liberally recompensed; and soon the cries of "France, France!" and of "Orso, Orso!" on behalf of France and the Orsini, were echoed in the streets, which were illuminated as though Constantinople or Jerusalem had been taken.

Money alone was now wanting to insure the success of the vast projects that the Pope and his son based upon the friendship and alliance of Louis XII.; but Alexander was not a man to endure any such distress. It is true the profits arising from the sale of benefices were exhausted, that the ordinary and extraordinary imposts of the year were already anticipated, that the inheritance of the cardinals and prelates was now almost unproduc-

tive, inasmuch as the richest had been poisoned; other resources remained, not the less efficacious because less employed. The first was to circulate throughout Christendom the rumour of an approaching invasion by the Turks; that the Pope was well aware that summer would not pass away before Bajazet had disembarked two powerful armies, one in the Romagna, the other in Calabria. Thereupon he published two bulls: one, to raise a tenth upon all ecclesiastical revenues; the other, to extort a similar sum from the Jews; and these missives contained the severest excommunications against all those who refused to submit, or attempted the slightest opposition. The second was the sale of indulgences, — a resource hitherto unknown. The deprivation of these indulgences had weighed heavily on those whose health or affairs had precluded their arrival at Rome during the jubilee; but by this gracious expedient of the Pope the journey was now unnecessary, and for the third of the sum it had previously cost, their sins were as fully and satisfactorily remitted as though the faithful had complied with all the conditions of their pilgrimage.

For the collection of this tax, if it might be so called, an army of collectors was established, of which Ludovico de la Torre was appointed chief. The sums thus raised and paid to Alexander were incalculable; some idea may be formed of them by the fact that the territory of Venice alone paid seven hundred and ninety-nine thousand pounds' weight of gold. But as the Turks made actually some warlike demonstrations in the direction of Hungary, which the Venetians feared might be the precursor of an attack on them, they sent to demand succour from the Pope; whereupon his Holiness decreed that throughout the papal States an "Ave Maria" should be chanted at midnight, to pray that God would defend the

republic from the threatened danger. This was the extent of the aid the Venetians obtained in exchange for the seven hundred and ninety-nine thousand pounds' weight of gold they had transmitted to the Holy See.

But, as if the crimes of Alexander had moved Divine Justice to warn him from the evil of his way, upon the vigil of St. Peter, as he approached the Campanile, proceeding to the place where the papal benediction is bestowed, an enormous bar of iron fell suddenly from it at his feet; and, as if one warning were not sufficient, on the morrow, being St. Peter's Day, whilst the Pope was in one of his usual apartments, with Cardinal Capuano and Monsignor Poto, he saw through the open windows so dense a mass of clouds gathering around that, anticipating a tempest, he ordered the cardinal to let them instantly be closed. He was scarcely obeyed when a furious blast of wind struck the highest chimney of the Vatican, which fell upon the roof, and, breaking through this, carried with it a portion of the upper floor into the chamber where the Pope and his attendants were. Upon this fall, which shook the palace, and the noise they heard behind them, the Cardinal Capuano and Monsignor Poto turned round, and, seeing the apartment choked with dust and covered with fragments of the building, rushed to the windows, exclaiming, "The Pope is dead! the Pope is dead!" whereupon the guards entered, and found three men stretched among the rubbish, one dead, the others dying. They were a Siennese gentleman and two commensals of the Vatican, who, passing through the upper apartments, had been struck down by the falling bricks around them.

Meanwhile all search for Alexander was fruitless, and, since there was no reply to the frequent shouts of his name, the belief of his death was confirmed, and was soon

circulated throughout the city. But after an interval they heard his groans, and he was then found recovering from a swoon, still confused by the blow, and wounded, though not dangerously, in many parts of his body. He had been saved by a kind of miracle: the beam had been broken in the middle, and had left each of its extremities in the side walls; one of these had thus formed a roof above the papal throne, so that his Holiness, who was seated thereon at the instant of its fall, had been protected by the vault it formed. The two contradictory statements of the sudden death and the miraculous preservation of the Pope were soon disseminated throughout Rome; and the Duc de Valentinois, alarmed by the effect that the slightest accident to his father would exercise upon his interests, hastened to the Vatican, unable to feel reassured of his safety but by his presence.

As for Alexander, he wished by a public act to render thanks to Heaven for the protection it had accorded, and immediately proceeded, accompanied by a numerous escort, to the church of Santa Maria del Popolo, in which were interred the bodies of the Duke of Gandia and Giovanni Borgia, — whether led so to do by a momentary gleam of devotion still lingering in his heart, or drawn thither by the impious love which he felt for his former mistress, Vanozza, who, beneath the form of the Madonna, was exposed to the veneration of the faithful in a chapel to the left of the high altar. On reaching the altar his Holiness presented to the church a magnificent chalice, within which were three hundred gold crowns, which the Cardinal of Sienna, to the great gratification of the papal vanity, exposed to the view of all in a patina of silver.

Before leaving Rome to undertake the conquest of the

Romagna, the Duc de Valentinois had reflected how useless both to him and to his father had now become the marriage once so earnestly desired between Lucrezia and Alfonso. Nor was this all. The present repose of Louis XII. in Lombardy was evidently no more than a halt, and Milan a mere stage on the road to Naples. Moreover, this union might possibly become a source of distrust to Louis, inasmuch as it made the nephew of his enemy the son-in-law of his ally. But, Alfonso dead, Lucrezia might remarry some powerful Seigneur de la Marche, du Ferrarais, or de la Bresse, who might aid her brother in the conquest of the Romagna.

Alfonso became, therefore, not only dangerous as a connexion, but useless as an ally, which latter to a Borgia was a crime; his death was decided upon. In the mean time the husband of Lucrezia, who had been long aware of the risk he incurred by residing near his fearful father-in-law, had retired to Naples. But as, with their habitual dissimulation, neither Alexander nor Cesare had in any way justified his suspicions, these had gradually abated, when he received an invitation from the Pope and his son to take part in a grand bull-fight after the Spanish mode, to be given upon the occasion of the duke's departure. In the precarious situation of the house of Naples, so lately ejected, so recently restored to the throne, it was the policy of Alfonso to give Alexander no excuse for enmity; he was anxious on this account not to refuse without an adequate motive, and therefore set out for Rome. But as the Pope and Cesare did not consider it desirable to consult Lucrezia in this affair, inasmuch as upon several occasions she had exhibited a ridiculous attachment to her husband, she was allowed to remain undisturbed in her government at Spoleto. Alfonso was received at Rome with every

demonstration of sincere friendship, and was lodged at the Vatican in the apartments he had before occupied with Lucrezia. The lists were prepared in the Piazza di San Pietro, the streets of which had been barricaded, whilst the adjoining houses were fitted up with galleries for the spectators, the Pope and his court occupying the balconies of the Vatican.

The festival began with hired bull-fighters. When they had exhibited their strength and skill, Alfonso of Aragon and Cesare Borgia entered the arena, and as a proof of the good feeling that existed between them, it was agreed that the bull which pursued Cesare should be slain by Alfonso, and that the one which pursued Alfonso should be slain by Cesare. Cesare entered the lists on horseback alone, Alfonso retiring, but ready to rejoin him when he should judge his presence to be required. At the same time the bull was let in, and instantly covered with darts and arrows, to which some fireworks were attached; and these exploding irritated the animal to such a degree that, after rolling on the earth, it arose maddened, and rushed instantly at Cesare, still awaiting it in the arena. It was then that Cesare displayed that consummate skill which made him one of the most accomplished horsemen of the period. Nevertheless his skill had been of no avail against such an adversary in so limited a space, where his only resource was flight, if, at the moment when the animal gained upon him, Alfonso had not suddenly appeared, shaking in his left hand a red cloak, and holding in his right a long and thin Aragonese sword.

It was time to act; the bull was but a few steps from Cesare, and his danger seemed so imminent that a cry of fear was heard from one of the windows; but upon seeing Alfonso the enraged beast suddenly stopped, and

after throwing up the dust with its hind feet, pawing the earth, and lashing its sides with its tail, with bloodshot eyes, and tearing up the earth with its horns, it rushed upon him. Alfonso quietly awaited its approach, and then, when the animal was within three steps of him, sprang quickly on one side, holding toward it his sword, which was suddenly sheathed up to the hilt; and immediately the bull, arrested in full career, remained for a moment motionless, yet quivering in every fibre, then fell upon its knees, breathed heavily, and lay dead upon the spot where it had been struck. So ably and rapidly was the blow struck that applause burst from all around; as for Cesare, he had remained unconcerned on horseback, endeavouring only to discover from whom the cry had proceeded which betrayed so marked an interest in him; and he soon recognised one of the ladies of honour of Elizabeth, Duchess of Urbino, then betrothed to Giovanni Baptisti Carracciolo, captain-general of the Venetian republic.

Another bull was now let in, and excited in the same manner, with darts and lighted arrows, and like the former, upon seeing the horseman, rushed instantly upon him. An extraordinary race now commenced, during which so rapid were the movements, that it was impossible to know whether the horse pursued the bull, or the bull the horse; nevertheless, after a few rounds, fleet as was the Andalusian steed which bore Alfonso, the bull began to gain upon him, so that soon there was scarce the distance of two lances between them, when Cesare in his turn suddenly appeared, armed with a two-handed sword, and at the instant when the bull, now pressing upon the horse's flank, rushed past him, he raised his sword and smote with such force that the blade, gleaming around like a flash of lightning, at one blow struck

off its head, whilst the body, still borne onwards by its impetus, fell ten steps from him in the lists. This was so unexpected, and had been executed with so much skill, that it was witnessed and greeted with applause bordering on frenzy. But Cesare, as if amid his triumph he was mindful only of the cry caused by the danger to which he had been first exposed, lifted up the head of the bull, and giving it to one of his squires, desired him, as an act of homage upon his part, to lay it at the feet of the beautiful Venetian who had expressed so lively an interest in his behalf.

This festival, besides the triumph that it had won for the combatants, had another object; it was to show the intimate feeling which existed between them, so that, whatever might occur to Alfonso, no one could accuse Cesare, — nor could Alfonso be accused of any evil accruing to Cesare.

There was a grand supper at the Vatican; Alfonso was elegantly dressed, and toward ten in the evening quitted the detached wing in which he resided, to enter that in which the Pope's apartments were situated; but the door dividing the two courts was closed, and remained unopened to his repeated knockings. He then thought of going round by the Piazza de San Pietro; and, unattended, proceeded along the dark streets which led to the staircase ascending to it. Hardly had his foot rested on the first steps, when he was attacked by a troop of armed men. Before he could draw his sword, he had received five wounds in different parts of his body, and fallen senseless. His assassins, supposing him to be dead, immediately reascended the steps, and finding in the Piazza de San Pietro a guard of forty horsemen who awaited them, quietly left the city under their protection, by the gate of Portese. Alfonso was found by

some passers-by, who bore him in a dying state to his apartments in the Torre-Nova.

Upon receiving information of this, the Pope and Cesare appeared so afflicted that they quitted their guests, and repaired immediately to Alfonso, as if to assure themselves whether his wounds were mortal or not; and the following morning, to avert any suspicions that might incline toward them, they arrested Francesco Gazella, his maternal uncle, who had accompanied his nephew to Rome. Convicted by suborned testimony, Gazella was beheaded. But the work had been only half performed; however diverted, there was yet such a sufficiency of suspicion that no one dared to name the real assassins; and Alfonso was not dead, for, owing to the excellence of his constitution and the skill of his attendants, who, believing the grief of the Pope and of his son to be sincere, had exerted their utmost skill in his favour, he was now advancing toward convalescence. Moreover, Lucrezia, hearing of the attack upon her husband, had set out to join him, with the intention of nursing him herself. There was therefore no time to lose; — Cesare desired the attendance of Michelotto. "The same night," says Burchard, "Don Alfonso, who was not willing to die of his wounds, was strangled in his bed." The following morning he was buried, if not with the pomp due to his rank, yet with becoming respect. The same evening Lucrezia arrived; she too well knew the character both of her father and brother to be deceived by them; and although the Duc de Valentinois, on the death of Don Alfonso, arrested not only his physicians, but a poor valet, she nevertheless saw whence the blow proceeded, and, fearful that the grief she now really felt might deprive her of the confidence of her relatives, she retired to Nepi with her

household, to pass the period of her mourning in that city.

The affairs of the family being thus arranged, and, Lucrezia being once more a widow, and consequently in a position to further the new political alliances of the Pope, Cesare remained at Rome only for the purpose of receiving the ambassadors of France and Venice. But as their arrival was slightly delayed, and as the expense of the last festivals had in some degree depleted the papal treasury, Alexander created another batch of twelve cardinals, whose promotion had a twofold result: first, that of obtaining six hundred thousand ducats; and secondly, that of securing him a decided majority in the Sacred College. The ambassadors at last arrived; the first, M. de Villeneuve, who had formerly come in the name of the King of France to visit Cesare, on the point of entering into Rome was accosted by a man in a mask, who expressed to him the pleasure he felt upon his arrival. This man was Cesare, who, unwilling to be recognised, after a short conference withdrew, but without removing his disguise. M. de Villeneuve entered the city behind him, and found at the gate Del Popolo the envoys of the different continental powers, even those of Spain and Naples, whose sovereigns, it is true, were not yet at open war with France, although commencing the withdrawal of their friendly relations with that court. Afraid of being compromised, the latter restricted themselves to merely saying to their colleague of France, "You are welcome, monsieur." The master of ceremonies, surprised at so concise a compliment, asked them whether they had anything further to say; and, upon receiving a negative, M. de Villeneuve turned his back upon them, adding that to those who had nothing to say, no answer was due; then placing himself with the Arch-

bishop of Reggio, the governor of Rome, and the Archbishop of Ragusa, he proceeded to the palace of the Holy Apostles, which had been prepared for his reception.

A few days afterward Maria Georgi, ambassador extraordinary from the Venetian republic, arrived. He was charged not only to regulate with the Pope the immediate interests of the State, but also to bear to Alexander and Cesare the title and inscription of their names as noble Venetians, — a favour they had long earnestly desired, not for its mere honour, but for the real influence it could secure them. The Pope next proceeded to bestow the hats upon those to whom he had sold the cardinalship, after which, as there was no other business to delay the departure of the Duc de Valentinois, he remained only to complete a loan with a rich banker named Augustino Chigi, brother of Lorenzo, who had been killed by the fall of the chimney at the Vatican, and then departed for the Romagna, accompanied by Vitellozzo Vitelli, by Giovanni Paolo Baglioni, and by Giacomo de Santa Croce, then his friends, and shortly afterward his victims. His first enterprise was against Pesaro, — a piece of brotherly attention of which Giovanni Sforza well understood the consequences; for, instead of attempting to defend his territories by arms, or to contend for them by negotiations, and unwilling to expose the beautiful country he had so long governed to the vengeance of an irritated enemy, he committed himself to the affectionate fidelity of his subjects, in the hope of some future change of fortune, and fled to Dalmatia. Malatesta of Rimini did the same, and Cesare, leaving garrisons in these cities, had advanced toward Faenza. This city was then under the government of Astor Manfredi, a brave youth of eighteen, who, although abandoned by the Bentivogli, by his relatives, and by his

allies, the Venetians and Florentines, resolved, knowing the affection of his subjects for his family, to defend himself to the last. Upon hearing that the duke was advancing against him, he hastily assembled all those of his vassals who were capable of bearing arms, and the few soldiers who were willing to enlist in his service, and, having collected provision and military stores, he shut himself up with his small force in the city. These preparations caused no disquiet to Cesare; he had an excellent army, composed of the best troops of France and Italy, who, excluding himself, reckoned amongst their chiefs Paolo and Giulio Orsini, Vitellozzo Vitelli, and Paolo Baglioni, the best captains of the day. Having surveyed the place, he began the siege by encamping between the two rivers, the Anima and the Marziano, placing his artillery upon the side which looks toward Forli, where the besieged had also erected a heavy battery.

After a few days, the breach being practicable, the duke directed an attack to be made, which as an example to his soldiers he himself commanded. But, notwithstanding his courage and that of his captains, Astor Manfredi made so stout a defence that the besiegers were repulsed with great loss, leaving in the ditches of the city Honorio Savello, one of their best chiefs. In spite of the courage and the devotion of its defenders, Faenza could not have long withstood the attacks of so powerful an army, had not winter advanced to its relief. Overtaken by the severity of the season, without shelter for his troops, and unable even to procure wood for fire, as the peasantry had laid waste the country, the duke was obliged to raise the siege, and to quarter his army in the adjacent cities, ready to open the campaign upon the return of spring; for Cesare, who could not endure that

a small city, accustomed to a long peace, governed by a minor, and deprived of every ally, should thus check his progress, had sworn to take merciless revenge for this delay. He divided, therefore, his army into three divisions,— the first being quartered at Imola, the second at Forli, posting himself with the third at Cesena, which, from a third-rate city, found itself suddenly changed into one of luxury and splendour. Indeed, to the active mind of Cesare, wars or festivals were always requisite; the war being suspended, the festivals commenced, sumptuous and exciting as he could make them; the days were passed in games and cavalcades, the nights in balls and debauchery, for the most beautiful women of the Romagna had arrived to form a seraglio for the victor that the Sultan of Egypt or of Constantinople might have envied.

CHAPTER VII.

It was in one of those excursions which, surrounded by his courtiers and titled courtesans, the Duc de Valentinois made in the environs of the city, that he saw advancing from the road to Rimini a retinue sufficiently numerous to induce him to believe that it accompanied some person of rank. And, soon remarking that this was a lady, he advanced, and recognised in her the attendant of the Duchess of Urbino, who had attracted his attention by the cry she had uttered when believing him to be endangered during the bull-fight. She was then betrothed to Giovanni Carracciolo, general of the Venetians; and Elizabeth of Gonzaga, her patroness and godmother, had now sent her, under a becoming escort, to Venice, where the marriage was to be solemnised. At Rome, Cesare had been much struck by her extreme beauty, which feeling this interview served but to increase, and from that moment he resolved to possess her, reproaching himself for the indifference he had manifested. In consequence he addressed her as an old acquaintance, inquired if it were her intention to remain any time at Cesena, and understood from her that she should only pass through, as, being impatiently expected, she allowed as few delays as possible, and was anxious to reach Forli, where she should sleep that night. This was all Cesare wished to know: he called Michelotto, and whispered some words to him unheard by anybody else. The cortège proceeded on its way as the fair betrothed had stated, making but a

momentary halt at Cesena; and although the day was far advanced, departed immediately for Forli; but hardly had it advanced a mile, when it was surrounded by a troop of horsemen from Cesena. Although inferior in numbers, the soldiers of the escort nevertheless defended their charge; but some being cut down, others fled, and as the lady meanwhile had descended from her litter and attempted to escape, the leader of the horsemen seized her in his arms, placed her before him upon his horse, and, ordering his soldiers to return to Cesena, he rode instantly across the country, and was soon lost in the obscurity of the night.

The account of this was conveyed to Carracciolo by one of the fugitives who had recognised in the horsemen the soldiers of the Duc de Valentinois. At first he seemed as one who understands not what is said, so difficult was it to give credence to a tale so fraught with pain. He again required its recital; then, after remaining for a few moments motionless, as though stunned by a thunderbolt, he suddenly started from this unnatural stupor and rushed toward the ducal palace, where the Doge Barberigo and the Council of Ten were already assembled, and advancing amid them, at the very instant they received the intelligence of this outrage of the duke, he exclaimed: —

"Most illustrious senators, resolved to risk in private revenge that life it was my hope to have dedicated to the service of the republic, I appear now before you to bid you respectfully farewell. I have been injured in the noblest feelings of the heart — in my honour. I have been robbed of that which was more dear to me than all else I possessed, — my wife; and he who has done this is the most perfidious, the most sacrilegious, the most infamous of men, — the Duc de Valentinois.

Be not offended, most illustrious senators, if thus I characterise a man who boasts to be of your nobility, and honoured by your protection. It is not so: he lies; his baseness and his crimes render him undeserving of both, as he is unworthy of that life of which I will deprive him by this sword. It is true that a man — the incarnation of sacrilege by his birth, a fratricide, the usurper of another's rights, an oppressor of the innocent, the assassin of the highway, a man who violates every law, that even which is sacred among nations the most barbarous, the law of hospitality; a man who, in his own territories, waylays and attacks a woman; one who, on the contrary, had not only a right to claim the respect due to her sex and rank, but also the homage due to the republic, whose general I am, — such a man, I repeat it, deserves death, but by another hand than mine. But as he who ought to punish, instead of being prince and judge, is a father as guilty as the son, I will myself seek out the author of this crime, and I will sacrifice my life, not only to revenge my own wrong, and the blood of the guiltless, but for the safety of this republic, at whose destruction he aims, when he has accomplished that of the other princes of Italy."

Tho doge and senators, already aware of the event which had thus brought Carracciolo before them, listened to his discourse with feelings of the deepest interest and indignation, — for, as he had truly said, the republic was insulted in this injury to its general; they swore, therefore, by their honour, that if he would confide in them instead of yielding to his thirst for revenge, of which he would assuredly be the victim, either his wife should be restored uninjured to his arms, or they themselves would exact redress in proportion to the injury he had sustained. As a proof of their earnestness, the tribunal immediately

despatched Luigi Manenti, secretary of the Council of Ten, to Imola, where, it was said, the duke then was, to express the extreme displeasure of the republic at this outrage. They, at the same time also, had an interview with the French ambassador, requesting him to proceed himself with Manenti to the Duc de Valentinois, to demand, in the name of Louis XII., the immediate freedom of the lady who had been thus waylaid. The envoys proceeded to Imola, where they found Cesare, who listened to their demands with every indication of surprise, declaring himself free even from the imputation of the crime, the authors of which he authorised Manenti and the ambassador to pursue, declaring that he too would cause the most active inquiries to be made. He exhibited so much good faith that for a moment the envoys were deceived, and commenced the strictest investigation. For this purpose they visited the place where the incident occurred, and the following was the information they obtained: The dead and wounded had been found upon the high-road. A horseman had been seen carrying away a woman at full gallop across the country; a peasant, returning from the fields, had seen him appearing and disappearing, like a shadow, in the direction of a lonely house; an old woman declared she saw him enter it. Yet on the following morning the house had disappeared as if by enchantment; the plough had passed over it, and none could tell what had become of her they sought, since the inmates of the house and the house itself were gone. Manenti and the ambassador returned, related what the duke had said, what they had done, and the fruitless results of their inquiries. No one doubted that Cesare was guilty of the crime, but none could prove the fact; the council, therefore, engaged in a war with the Turks, were unwilling to commit themselves with the

Pope, and forbade Carracciolo to seek redress; so that by degrees the excitement died away, and the incident was soon forgotten.

Upon the return of spring, Cesare reassembled his troops, and again led them to the attack upon Faenza. Another breach was effected, whereupon he ordered a general assault, which again he headed; but, notwithstanding his courage, and the brave support of his soldiers, they were repulsed by Astor, who led on his men to the defence of the ramparts, from the heights of which the women rolled down stones and trunks of trees upon their assailants. After an hour's contest, Cesare was forced to retreat, leaving two thousand men in the ditches of the fortification, and amongst these Valentino Farnese, one of his bravest *condottieri*. Then, as neither excommunications nor assaults availed him, the duke converted the siege into a rigorous blockade; and as he had remarked some symptoms of a revolt at Cesena, he placed there as governor Ramiro d'Orco, — a man of the most remorseless resolution, with the power of life and death over its inhabitants.

At the expiration of a month, during which Faenza endured all the horrors of famine, commissioners arrived at the duke's camp to propose terms of capitulation. Cesare, pressed by his extensive designs in the Romagna, listened very willingly to their proposals, and it was agreed that the city should surrender upon condition that the lives and property of its inhabitants should be spared; that Astor Manfredi should be allowed to retire where he pleased, and should still retain his patrimonial revenue.

These terms were scrupulously observed as regarded the city, but Cesare, upon meeting Astor, struck by his appearance, which, from his youth, was rather feminine,

detained him in his camp, paying him all the respect due to a prince, and appearing to have for him the sincerest friendship. But Astor, like the betrothed of Carracciolo, soon after disappeared, no one knew where; Cesare even appeared uneasy, but intimated he had probably escaped, and sent couriers after him in every direction. A year after this, in the Tiber, a little above the castle of San Angelo, the body of a beautiful woman, whose hands were tied behind her back, and that also of a handsome youth, around whose neck yet hung the bow-string with which he had been strangled, were found. The woman was the betrothed of Carracciolo, the youth was Astor, for a year victims of the lust of Cesare, who had them then thrown into the Tiber. By the conquest of Faenza he obtained the title of Duke of Romagna, which was first bestowed upon him in full consistory by the Pope, and next ratified by the King of Hungary, the republic of Venice, and the Kings of Castile and Portugal.

The news of this ratification reached Rome on the anniversary of the foundation of the eternal city, which caused it to be celebrated with increased splendour. But the ambition of the duke increased as it was gratified. No sooner was he master of Faenza, than, stimulated by the Mariscotti, the ancient enemies of the Bentivogli, he meditated the conquest of Bologna; but Giovanni de Bentivoglio, whose ancestry from time immemorial had possessed the city, had not only made every requisite preparation for a protracted defence, but had also placed himself under the protection of France; and no sooner did he hear that Cesare was advancing upon Bologna with his army than he despatched an envoy to Louis, to request the fulfilment of his promise. Louis fulfilled it with his accustomed honour; and when Cesare reached Bologna, he was met by a request from the King of

France to abandon his enterprise against his ally Bentivoglio; but not being inclined to retreat without compensation for his march, he proposed terms to which Bentivoglio acceded, too happy to be freed from his enemy at the price demanded, — the cession of Castel-Bolenese, a fortress situated between Imola and Faenza, a tribute of nine thousand ducats, and the maintenance in Cesare's service of one hundred men-at-arms, and two thousand foot-soldiers. In return for these advantages, the duke acquainted Bentivoglio that he was indebted for this visit to the suggestions of the Mariscotti; then, reinforced by the contingent of his new ally, he took the road to Tuscany. He was hardly out of sight, when Bentivoglio closed the gates of Bologna, and directed his son Hermes to assassinate with his own hand Agamemnon Mariscotti, while he himself massacred thirty-four of his brothers' sons, daughters, or nephews, and two hundred of their relatives and friends. This butchery was effected by the noblest of the youth of Bologna, whom Bentivoglio compelled to steep their hands in blood, the more strongly to attach them to him, through fear of reprisals.

The designs of Cesare against Florence were now no longer to be concealed; early in January he had sent to Pisa Regnier della Sassetta, and Pietro de Gamba Corti, with a powerful force; and the conquest of the Romagna effected, he despatched Oliverotto da Fermo thither also with additional detachments. He had also reinforced his army by the levies from Bologna; he had been rejoined by Vitellozzo Vitelli, lord of Citta-di-Castello, and by the Orsini at the head of two or three thousand men, so that exclusive of those at Pisa, he had now seven hundred men-at-arms, and five thousand foot-soldiers. Yet notwithstanding this, upon entering into Tuscany, he declared that his intentions were entirely

pacific, that he sought only to pass through the territory of the republic upon his return to Rome, and offered to pay upon the spot for whatever provisions his army might require. But when he had passed the defiles of the mountains, and had reached Barberino, knowing then that the city was in his power, and that its approaches were defenceless, he placed a price upon the friendship he had offered, and began to impose conditions, rather than to submit to them. These were, that the republic should recall Pietro de' Medici, the relation and ally of the Orsini; that six burgesses of the city, to be named by Vitellozzo, should be delivered up to him, that their death might atone for the unjust execution of Paolo Vitelli by the Florentines; that the senate should engage to withhold all succour from the lord of Piombino; and that, lastly, Cesare should be engaged in the service of the State, with a pay in proportion to his claims. But whilst things were at this point, he received the commands of the King of France to join him with his army against Naples, the conquest of which he was now enabled to undertake. He dared not refuse compliance, but as the Florentines were ignorant of this summons to quit Tuscany, he fixed the price of his retreat at the payment of a sum of thirty-six thousand ducats a year, for which he engaged to maintain three hundred men-at-arms, always ready to defend the republic upon any emergency that might arise. Hurried as he was by his engagements with the King of France, he yet hoped to conquer the territory of Piombino, and to carry its capital by a sudden assault; but he found that Giacomo d'Appiano was prepared to meet him, and had already laid waste the country around, destroying even the fountains which might supply water to his troops. Nevertheless, in a few

days he was master of Severito, Scarlino, the island of Elba, and Pianosa, but he was checked by the citadel, which offered a determined resistance; and as Louis XII. continued his march toward Rome, he was obliged to quit his army, leaving Vitellozzo and Baglioni to continue the siege. Louis now advanced toward Naples, not with the thoughtless impetuosity of Charles VIII., but with his habitual circumspection. Besides his alliances with Florence and Rome, he had concluded a secret treaty with Ferdinand the Catholic, who put forth, through the line of Duras, the same claims upon the kingdom of Naples as Louis through the house of Anjou.

By this treaty, the kings divided their spoil; Louis was to possess Naples and the Abruzzi, with the title of King of Naples and of Jerusalem; Ferdinand was to obtain Apulia and Calabria, with the title of duke of those provinces; the investiture of which they were both to receive from the Pope. The French army, which was now joined by the Duc de Valentinois, was composed of one thousand lances, four thousand Swiss, and six thousand Gascons, whilst Philippe de Robenstein conducted by sea an additional force of six thousand five hundred men. Against this force, the King of Naples had only seven hundred men-at-arms, six hundred light-horse, and six thousand foot-soldiers to bring into the field; but he relied much upon Gonsalvo de Cordova, who was to rejoin him at Gaeta, and to whom he had, therefore, opened all the fortresses of Calabria.

But this confidence in his faithless ally was not of long duration; upon arriving at Rome the French and Spanish ambassadors presented to the Pope the secret treaty signed at Granada the 11th of November, 1500, between Louis and Ferdinand. Although Alexander

in his provident sagacity had freed himself by the death of Alfonso from every engagement with the house of Aragon, he nevertheless still raised some objections to its terms; but when it was pointed out that they had been drawn up solely to give the Christian princes an increased opportunity of attacking the Ottoman empire, such considerations, it may be well conceived, overcame whatever scruples he entertained; and he decided, therefore, on the 26th of June, in full consistory, to declare Frederic no longer King of Naples. Frederic, indeed, on hearing of the arrival of the French army, the treachery of Ferdinand, and the act of dethronement published by Alexander, perceived that all was lost; but, nevertheless, he was unwilling it should be said that he renounced his kingdom without at least an attempt for its defence. He directed, therefore, Fabricio Colonna and Ranucio de Marciano to check, if possible, the French before Capua with three hundred men-at-arms, some light-horse and infantry; he himself occupied Aversa with another division, whilst Prospero Colonna, with the remainder, was to defend Naples and oppose the Spaniards in Calabria.

These arrangements were scarcely made, when D'Aubigny, passing the Volturno, laid siege to Capua, which he at once invested on both sides of the river. The French had hardly encamped, when their artillery was brought into play, to the great terror of the besieged, who were almost all merely fugitives from the neighbouring districts. Thus, although the assaults of the enemy had been bravely repelled by Fabricio Colonna, so great and headstrong was their terror that every one talked of immediate surrender, and it was with the utmost difficulty that Colonna could induce the multitude to understand that it was at least desirable to profit

by the check the besiegers had experienced, and thus to obtain favourable terms of surrender. But this was not the interest of Cesare Borgia; any capitulation whatever would deprive him of the booty and pleasure that the sack of a city so rich and densely populated as Capua must insure. He therefore, upon his own account, entered into stipulations with one of the chiefs stationed to defend a gate of the city, — negotiations which, by the weight of gold, were far more efficacious than any others.

Whilst Fabricio Colonna was discussing on the bastions the terms of surrender with the French commanders, sudden cries of terror and for mercy arose from the besieged; for Borgia, without the slightest intimation of his design, had entered the city at the head of his troops, and was cutting down the garrison, who, relying on the signature of the treaty, had withdrawn from their posts. The French on their side, perceiving that half of the city had surrendered, rushed through the gates with such impetuosity that all further resistance was useless. The butchery and pillage had begun, and in vain did Fabricio Colonna, Marciano, and Don Ugo de Cardona attempt, by the few men they had hastily assembled, to make head at once against the French and Spaniards. Fabricio and Ugo were made prisoners; Ranucio fell wounded into the hands of the Duc de Valentinois; seven thousand of the besieged were massacred in the streets, including the traitor who had betrayed the gate; the churches were pillaged, the nunneries attacked, and the inmates of these were seen to throw themselves down the wells, or into the river, to escape the brutal passions of the soldiers. Three hundred of them, daughters of the noblest families of Capua, had taken refuge in a tower; the Duc de Valen-

tinois burst open its gates, selected forty of the most beautiful for himself, and abandoned the rest to his army. The pillage lasted three days.

Capua taken, Frederic felt that any further attempts to defend himself were useless; he in consequence shut himself up in the Château Neuf, and allowed Gaeta and Naples to enter into terms with the conqueror. Gaeta was spared on the payment of sixty thousand ducats, and Naples on the surrender of the citadel, which was yielded up by Frederic to D'Aubigny upon condition of his being allowed to retire to Ischia, with his treasures and jewellery, and to reside there unmolested during six months with his family. This capitulation was faithfully adhered to on both sides; D'Aubigny entered into Naples, and Frederic withdrew to Ischia.

Thus fell for ever that branch of the house of Aragon, after a reign of sixty-five years. Frederic, its head, demanded and obtained permission to enter France, where Louis XII. granted him the duchy of Anjou and a pension of thirty thousand ducats, upon condition that he should never leave the kingdom, where he died September 9, 1504. His eldest son, Don Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria, withdrew into Spain, where he died in 1550. Alfonso II., who had accompanied his father into France, died poisoned, it was said, at Grenoble, at the age of twenty-two; lastly Cesare, the third son, died at Ferrara in his eighteenth year. Carlotta, his daughter, was married in France to Nicolas, Comte de Saval, governor and admiral of Brittany; one daughter, the result of this marriage, was Anne de Saval, who was married to François de La Trémouille, and it is through her that the house of La Trémouille inherited those rights which they subsequently made good upon the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The surrender of

Naples freed the Duc de Valentinois from his engagements; he quitted, therefore, the French army, after having received from its commander renewed assurances of the friendship of Louis XII., and returned to the siege of Piombino.

In the mean time the Pope visited the conquests of his son, and traversed the Romagna, accompanied by Lucrezia, who, at last consoled for the loss of her husband, had never been so high in his Holiness's favour; and upon her return to Rome she inhabited the same apartments as her father. The consequence of this renewal of papal friendship was two bulls, which raised to a duchy the cities of Nepi and of Sermoneta; one was given to Giovanni Borgia, and the other to Don Rodrigo of Aragon, son of Lucrezia and of Alfonso, and the territories of the Colonna were awarded as an appanage to these two duchies. Besides this, Alexander was already planning a further increase to his prosperity by a union between Lucrezia and Don Alfonso d'Este, son of Hercules, Duke of Ferrara, in favour of which Louis XII. had interested himself.

On the same day that he received intelligence of the fall of Piombino, he heard also that Duke Hercules had given his consent to the King of France. This news, in both respects, was of the greatest interest to Alexander, although one greatly exceeded the other in importance; the marriage of Lucrezia with the heir presumptive of the duchy of Ferrara was, in fact, received with a joy that savoured a little of the upstart.

The Duc de Valentinois was invited to return to Rome, to assist at the public festivals, and the day of the announcement of the marriage the governor of the castle of San Angelo received orders to fire the cannon every fifteen minutes, from noon till midnight.

At two o'clock Lucrezia left the Vatican, accompanied by her brothers, the Duc de Valentinois and the Duke of Squillace, accompanied by all the nobility of Rome, and proceeded to the church della Madonna del Popolo, wherein the Duke of Gandia and Giovanni Borgia were buried, to return thanks for this additional sign of the favour and protection of Heaven; and in the evening, accompanied by the same cavalcade, rendered still more brilliant by the light of torches and the glare of the illuminations, she passed throughout the city amid cries of "Long live Pope Alexander VI.," "Long live the Duchess of Ferrara," which were shouted by two heralds, dressed in cloth of gold.

On the following morning various public games, including a bull-fight and masquerades, were announced. A few days after this Lucrezia proceeded to the Vatican, where the Pope, the Duc de Valentinois, Cardinal d'Este, and Don Ferdinand, proxy of the Duke Alfonso, awaited her arrival. The ceremony of the betrothals being completed, Cardinal d'Este presented to Lucrezia four costly jewelled rings, and then placed upon the table a casket, richly inlaid with ivory, from which he took a quantity of jewels, chains, and collars of pearls and diamonds, the workmanship of which was not less valuable than the materials; and these he also requested her to accept until Don Alfonso could himself offer others more deserving her attention. Lucrezia most joyfully received them, and then retired, leaning on the Pope's arm, and accompanied by the ladies of her court, leaving the Duc de Valentinois to entertain the ambassadors at the Vatican.

The ceremony of the espousals concluded, the Pope and the Duc de Valentinois occupied themselves with the arrangements for her departure. Anxious that this

should be conducted with great pomp, the Pope appointed, as a becoming escort for his daughter, besides her two brothers-in-law, and the gentlemen of their retinue, the senate of Rome, and all those nobles whose fortune enabled them to display the greatest magnificence in their dresses and liveries. Among them were Oliviero and Ramiro Mattei, sons of Pietro Mattei and of a daughter that was born to the Pope by another connexion than that with Vanozza; moreover, his Holiness appointed Francesco Borgia, Cardinal de Cosenza, legate *à latere*, to accompany his daughter to the frontiers of the papal States. The Duc de Valentinois at the same time gave orders that Lucrezia should be received throughout the cities of the Romagna as their sovereign, and thereupon great preparations were made to comply with his desire. The messengers, however, appointed for this purpose, reported that they greatly feared much dissatisfaction would be expressed at Cesena, where it will be remembered Cesare, to retain it in subjection, had left Ramiro d'Orco governor, with power of life and death over the citizens. Ramiro d'Orco had so well discharged the duty intrusted to him that there was nothing more to fear as regarded rebellion, for one-sixth of the inhabitants had perished upon the scaffold. A city in mourning for its dead could not be expected to offer the same demonstrations of joy as would be exhibited at Imola, Faenza, or Pesaro; but the duke remedied this inconvenience with a promptitude and success which was peculiarly his own. On awaking one morning the inhabitants of Cesena found a scaffold erected in the public square of the town, upon which was a man, quartered; and this was surmounted by his head, affixed to the end of a pike. This was all that remained of Ramiro d'Orco. By whom this scaffold

had been erected, by whom this terrible execution had taken place, was entirely unknown; but the republic of Florence, requiring from Machiavelli, their envoy to Cesena, his opinion of the act, received for answer,—

ILLUSTRIOUS LORDS, — I can give you no information relative to the execution, except that Cesare Borgia is a prince who knows the best how to make and to unmake men according to their merits.

NICOLO MACHIAVELLI.

The duke's forethought was successful; the Duchess of Ferrara was warmly received in every city through which she passed, and particularly in the city of Cesena. Whilst thus Lucrezia proceeded to Ferrara, to meet her fourth husband, Alexander and the Duc de Valentinois resolved to make a tour in their latest conquest, the duchy of Piombino. The apparent motive of this was to receive the oath of submission from the duke's new subjects, but the real motive was to form an arsenal in the capital of Giacomo Appiano, bearing upon Tuscany, their designs on which neither the Pope nor his son had ever seriously renounced. They embarked, therefore, at Corneto in ten galleys, accompanied by a great number of cardinals and prelates, and arrived the same evening at Piombino. Here the papal court remained for some days, as well for the duke to receive the allegiance of the citizens, as to assist at some church ceremonies, the principal of which was held by the Pope, upon the third Sunday in Lent; at which the Cardinal of Cosenza chanted the mass, assisted by the Pope, and attended by the Duc de Valentinois. Then, that his habitual pleasures might relieve the performance of these serious duties, the Pope desired the attendance of the most beautiful girls of the country to go through

their national dances in his presence. To these, festivals of the most sumptuous kind succeeded, at which, although it was Lent, the Pope made no secret of his neglect of the abstinence enjoined.

The object of these festivals was also to spend a considerable sum of money in the country, and to make the duke popular by weakening as much as possible the memory of the unfortunate Giacomo d'Appiano. After Piombino they visited the Isle of Elba, where they remained only so long as was requisite to inspect the old, and give orders for the construction of some new, fortifications. They then re-embarked to return to Rome, but the weather became stormy, and the Pope being unwilling to put back to Porto Ferrajo, they remained five days in the galleys, which had on board provisions for two days only. During the last three days the Pope subsisted only upon some fried fish, obtained with great difficulty, owing to the weather. They arrived off Corneto, where the duke, who was in another galley, disembarked, whilst the Pope was forced to continue his course toward Pontercola, which he finally reached after encountering so violent a tempest that all his attendants were completely exhausted, either by its effects or by the fear of death. The Pope alone was calm and collected, remaining on the deck, seated in an easy-chair, invoking the name of Jesus, and making the sign of the cross. He joined the Duke of Corneto, and thence by short stages they proceeded by Civita Vecchia and Palo, and so returned to Rome. Almost at the same time Cardinal d'Albret arrived to receive the "promised hat" from the Pope; he was accompanied by the two infants of Navarre, who were welcomed, not only with the honours due to their rank, but also as the brothers-in-law of the Duc de Valentinois, who was

anxious to evince the importance he attached to their alliance.

It was now requisite for the duke to resume his conquests, and as on the 1st of May in the preceding year, the Pope had in full consistory pronounced the sentence which deprived Giulio Cesare de Varano of his estates, and the annexation to the Holy See, as a punishment for the murder of his brother Rodolpho, and the protection he had granted to the Pope's enemies, Cesare quitted Rome to execute that decree. Upon his arrival on the frontiers of Perouse belonging to his general, Giovanni Paolo Baglioni, he despatched Oliverotto da Fermo and Gravina Orsini to lay waste the march of Camerino, requesting at the same time the aid of Guido d'Ubaldo di Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, in the enterprise, which the duke, in the strictest amity with the Pope, and having no reason to suspect the intentions of Cesare, did not dare refuse. But the same day that his troops marched toward Camerino, those of the Duc de Valentinois entered the duchy of Urbino, and made themselves masters of Cagli, one of the four cities of this minor State.

The duke foresaw the consequences of resistance; he fled, therefore, disguised as a peasant, so that within less than eight days Cesare was in possession of his duchy, excepting the fortresses of Maiolo and of San Leo. The duke now returned to Camerino, which still held out, animated by the presence of Giulio Cesare de Varano, and of his two sons Venantio and Annibale; the eldest, Giovanni Maria, he had sent to Venice. Cesare's arrival led to conferences. A capitulation was drawn up, by which security of life and the possession of their property was conceded to the besieged. But this was not in accordance with the objects of Cesare;

therefore, profiting by the relaxation of vigilance, which naturally ensues upon the announcement of a capitulation, he surprised the city the night prior to its surrender, and made Varano and his two sons prisoners, who were all strangled, the father at Pergola, and the two sons at Pesaro, by Don Michel Correglia, who, although promoted to a captaincy, returned at intervals to his earlier avocations as a *sbirro*.

In the mean time Vitellozzo Vitelli, with the title of vicar-general of the Church, having under his command eight hundred men-at-arms and three thousand infantry, had, in compliance with the secret and verbal instructions he had received from Cesare, strictly carried out the system of invasion, which was to encompass Florence in a net of iron, and render her defence impossible. A scholar worthy of the master, taught to employ either the slyness of the fox or the strength of the lion, he had intrigued with some youthful nobles of Arezzo to deliver up to him the city.

Meanwhile, the conspiracy being discovered by Guglielmo de' Pazzi, the Florentine commissioner, he caused the arrest of two of its members; but the others, far more numerous than had been supposed, assembling in all parts of the city, and urging an appeal to arms, the republicans, who in any revolution saw the means of throwing off the Florentine yoke, joined them, set free the captives, seized Guglielmo, and having proclaimed the re-establishment of the ancient constitution, laid siege to the citadel, where Cosmo de' Pazzi, Bishop of Arezzo, had taken refuge, who, finding himself surrounded on all sides, immediately despatched a courier to Florence to demand aid. Unfortunately for the cardinal, the troops of Vitelli were nearer to the besiegers than those of Florence to the besieged; so that, instead

of auxiliaries, the army of the enemy approached. This was commanded by Vitelli, Baglioni, and Orsini; and along with them were the two Medici, who hastened to every quarter where there was a league against Florence, and who placed themselves entirely in the hands of Borgia, ready to enter the city from which they had been expelled, under any stipulation whatever. Another reinforcement, both in artillery and money, from Pandolfo Petrucci arrived the following morning, so that the citadel, unsupported by Florence, was obliged on the 18th of June to surrender.

Vitellozzo intrusted the charge of the city to the Aretini, garrisoned the citadel with a thousand men under Fabio Orsino, and, profiting by the terror which the successive conquests of the duchy of Urbino, Camerino, and Arezzo had created, he marched upon Monte San Severino, upon Castiglioni-Aretino, Cortona, and the other cities of the Val de Chiana, all which surrendered almost without defence. Thus within ten or twelve leagues from Florence, yet not daring to attack it, he sent to receive instructions from Cesare, who, thinking the time had now arrived to strike the blow so long suspended, departed immediately to be the messenger of his own reply to his lieutenants. But if the Florentines had sent no succours to Guglielmo de' Pazzi, they had at least required them from Chaumont d'Amboise, governor of the Milanese for Louis XII., pointing out not only the danger incurred, but also the ambitious projects of Cesare, who, first invading the minor, then the secondary States, would probably be so excited by the pride of conquest as to attack the territories of the king.

At this time the state of Naples was unsatisfactory; serious differences already had arisen between the Comte

d'Armagnac and Gonsalvo de Cordova. Louis XII. might soon require the assistance of Florence, always hitherto faithful. He resolved, therefore, to stop Cesare's further advance; and not only did he send him an order to stop the march of his troops, but, to insure its fulfilment, he marched instantly four hundred lances, under Imbaut, into Tuscany. Upon the frontiers, therefore, Cesare received a copy of a treaty concluded between the republic and the King of France, in which the former was bound to aid her ally against all enemies whatever, and along with it the formal order from the king forbidding his further advance. Cesare heard at the same time that, in addition to the force under Imbaut, Louis, on arriving at Asti, had immediately directed two hundred men-at-arms, three thousand Swiss, and a powerful train of artillery, to advance toward Parma, under Louis de La Trémouille. He saw in these combined movements hostile designs toward himself, and instantly changed, with his customary ability, his policy to his purpose. Profiting by his merely verbal instructions, he wrote to Vitellozzo, reproaching him with having compromised his interests for the furtherance of his own, desiring him immediately to restore to the Florentines the cities and fortresses he had captured, threatening to march against him if these were longer retained. This done, he set out for Milan, where Louis had just arrived, offering by the very fact of the evacuation of the captured cities a convincing proof that he had been misrepresented to the king. He was also empowered by the Pope to renew for eighteen months the title of legate *à latere* conferred upon Cardinal d'Amboise, the friend rather than the minister of Louis.

Owing to this public proof of his innocence and his influence, Cesare was soon reconciled to the king. Nor

was this all: ever bent upon rising the greater from the event designed to crush him, he calculated at once the possible advantages to be derived from this pretended disobedience of his lieutenants. Their power was already a source of uneasiness to him, and he thought the time was perhaps at hand when, by their destruction and the possession of their estates, he might obtain some indemnification for the loss of Florence, which invariably escaped from his grasp when most it seemed within his power. The lieutenants of the Duc de Valentinois, like those of Alexander, were already too powerful, and Borgia must inherit their domains if he wished to prevent their inheritance of his. He obtained three hundred lances from Louis to march against them. Vitellozzo, however, had no sooner read the letter of Cesare than he foresaw that he was sacrificed to the fear of offending the King of France; but he was not one thus coolly to be offered up in expiation of a fault. Moreover, the examples of Marano and Manfredi were before him; and, death for death, it was better to fall with arms in his hands. He convoked, therefore, at Maggione, all those whose lives and domains were menaced by this new change in the policy of Cesare. These were, Paolo Orsino, Giovanni Paolo Baglioni, Hermes Bentivoglio, Antonio de Venafro, Oliverotto da Fermo, and the Duke of Urbino; the first six had everything to lose; the last had lost all. They signed a league for mutual defence, whether they were attacked conjointly or separately.

The first intimation of this treaty was brought to Cesare by its results. The Duke of Urbino, beloved by his subjects, had no sooner arrived with a few soldiers before the fortress of San Leo than it surrendered, and in less than eight days the entire duchy was reunited

under the government of the duke. Cesare was at Imola, where he awaited the arrival of the French troops, but almost without soldiers; so that, had Bentivoglio and the Duke of Urbino united their forces and marched against him, it is probable either that he would have been made prisoner, or constrained to quit the Romagna; this was made more probable by the fact that Don Ugo de Cardona and Michelotto, having misunderstood his instructions, had found their communications with him suddenly cut off. He had, in fact, desired them to fall back upon Rimini, and to bring him two hundred light-horse and five hundred infantry which they commanded; but, unacquainted with the danger of his position, whilst they attempted to carry Pergola and Fossonbrone by surprise, they were surrounded by Orsino, Gravina, and Vitellozzo. Ugo de Cardona and Michelotto made a stout defence, notwithstanding which their troops were cut to pieces. The former was made prisoner; the latter escaped only by concealing himself among the dead; then at nightfall he took refuge at Fano. The confederates, however, notwithstanding the weakness of his force, did not venture to attack Cesare, — whether through fear, or through respect for him as the ally of the King of France; they therefore contented themselves with the reduction of the surrounding cities and fortresses, many of which fell into the hands of Vitellozzo, Orsino, and Gravina; whilst Giovanni Maria de Varano, who had escaped the massacre of his family, re-entered Camerino amid the acclamations of his people.

Yet these successes by no means diminished the confidence of Cesare in his good fortune; and whilst on the one hand he hastened the arrival of the French troops, and enlisted in his pay the numerous roving bands then known as the "lances brisées," he opened negotiations

with his enemies, certain that the day which should bring them to a conference would witness their destruction. Cesare had, in fact, been endowed by Heaven with the fatal gift of persuasion, so that, well aware as men might be of his duplicity, there was no means to resist it, — not so much because of his eloquence, as owing to that air of frank *bonhomie* which he so well knew how to assume, and which Machiavelli so highly praised, who, subtle politician as he was, had been frequently deceived by its address. To induce Paolo Orsino to treat with him at Imola, he sent the Cardinal Borgia to the confederates as a hostage. Paolo thereupon hesitated no longer, and reached Imola the 20th of October, 1502. The duke welcomed him as one welcomes an old friend, from whom he has been separated for a few days by some trifling and momentary disagreement. He frankly avowed that the wrong was on his side, since he had alienated from him men who were at once loyal nobles and brave captains; but, he added, among men of their character, an open and sincere explanation such as he now offered ought to restore everything to its former friendly footing. Then, as a proof that it was not fear but good-will that had induced him to seek a reconciliation, he showed to Orsino the letters of Cardinal d'Amboise, announcing the immediate arrival of the French troops; he drew out before him his new recruits, desiring they should be well convinced that what he principally regretted was not so much the loss of captains so distinguished that they were the soul of his vast designs, but that he had for one instant induced the world to believe he had not recognised their merit; that in consequence he relied upon him, whom he had ever preferred to all, to induce his colleagues to conclude with him a peace which

should be as profitable as war was prejudicial to their interests, and that for himself he was ready to enter into any arrangements not derogatory to his honour.

Orsino was a man in every respect suited for Cesare's purposes, proud and self-conceited, — a sincere believer of the proverb, that a Pope could not reign for eight days against the will of the Colonna and the Orsini. He trusted, therefore, if not to Cesare's good faith, at least to his necessities, and signed, October 18, 1502, the following convention: —

His Excellency the Duke of Romagna on the one hand, and on the other the Orsini, with their confederates, being desirous of putting an end to the enmities which have arisen between them, agree to the following terms: that there shall be a perpetual peace and alliance between the contracting parties; and that in conformity with that design, his Excellency the Duke of Romagna shall receive as confederates all the aforesaid nobles, each promising to defend the estates of all in general, and of each in particular, against whoever may attack them, excepting always his Holiness the Pope Alexander VI., and his most Christian Majesty Louis XII., King of France. The undermentioned nobles agree also in the same terms to defend the person and estates of his Excellency as well as those of the illustrious nobles, Don Godfredo Borgia, Don Roderigo Borgia, and Don Giovanni Borgia, all brothers or nephews of the Duke of Romagna. Moreover, as the rebellion and conquest of the duchies of Urbino and Camerino have occurred during the late differences, the aforesaid nobles agree to assist in their recovery, and his Excellency the Duke of Romagna is bound to continue to the Orsini and Vitelli their former military engagements, and upon the same conditions. He promises, moreover, to demand the personal service but of one of the confederates; that of the others being voluntary. He engages also the ratification of the second treaty, which releases Cardinal Orsino from his residence at Rome, except as it may be in conformity with his own desires. And as differ-

ences have arisen between the Pope and Giovanni Bentivoglio, these shall be submitted to the arbitrament without appeal of Cardinal Orsino, the Duke of Romagna, and of Pandolfo Petrucci. The aforesaid nobles agree also upon the requisition of the Duke of Romagna, to place in his hands, as hostages, one of the legitimate children of each, at the time and place it may please him to indicate. Moreover, if any of the contracting parties are made aware of designs prejudicial to the interests of another, they are bound to apprise him and the other confederates of the fact. Finally, to consider, as their common enemy, whoever fails in the fulfilment of the present stipulations, and to combine for the destruction of such estates as may oppose them.

CESARE.
PAUL ORSINO.
AGAPIT, *Secretary.*

When Orsino reported to the confederates the signature of the treaty, Bentivoglio, unwilling to submit to the arbitration, made proposals to Cesare for the termination of their differences by a separate agreement, and sent his son to him, to draw up its terms, which, after some conferences, were settled as follows: Bentivoglio was to withdraw from the confederates, to furnish for eight years nine hundred men-at-arms and a hundred mounted cross-bowmen to the duke, and to pay twelve thousand ducats annually to Cesare, for the recruitment of one hundred lances. On which account his son Annibal was to have the niece of the Duc de Valentinois in marriage; and the Pope would acknowledge his sovereignty over Bologna. The King of France, the Duke of Ferrara, and the republic were to be the guarantees for its fulfilment.

Meanwhile the convention signed by Orsino met with considerable opposition. Vitelli, above all, never ceased to warn his confederates that this peace was far too

prompt and easy not to be the covert of a snare; but as the duke had now raised a powerful force at Imola, the four hundred lances from Louis XII. having now reached him, he and Oliverotto decided upon its signature, and to intimate to the Duke of Urbino and the Lord of Camerino their resolution; whereupon the former withdrew to Citta-di-Castello, and the latter to Naples. The Duc de Valentinois in the mean time, without any indication of his design, had commenced his march on the 10th of December, advancing toward Cesena with the powerful force he had collected. Alarm was everywhere excited, not only in Romagna, but throughout the north of Italy. Florence feared that its retreat from her territories concealed a snare, and Venice, observing its approach, immediately despatched an army to the Po. Cesare, perceiving this, and fearing it might prejudice his interests by creating distrust, dismissed at Cesena his French auxiliaries, excepting one hundred men-at-arms, commanded by M. de Candale, his brother-in-law, reducing his force to two thousand cavalry and ten thousand infantry.

Some days were spent in conferences at Cesena, for the duke here met the envoys of the confederates who were with their troops in the duchy of Urbino; but from the very first deliberation upon the course to be pursued with respect to the completion of its conquest, so many difficulties were started that it was felt that an interview between Cesare and one of the other parties to the treaty was requisite. Thereupon Oliverotto da Fermo proposed to him either to march upon Tuscany, or to seize upon Sinigaglia, — the last place in the duchy of Urbino not yet restored to his power. Cesare replied that he was unwilling to carry war into Tuscany, the Tuscans being his allies; but he approved the latter

project, and consequently marched toward Fano. But the daughter of Frederic, the former Duke of Urbino, who held the citadel of Sinigaglia, aware that defence was impossible, committed it to the charge of an officer, desiring him to obtain for the city the most favourable terms he could.

The duke heard of this at Rimini by a courier from Vitelli and the Orsini, who informed him that the governor of the citadel had declined its surrender to them, but was willing to enter into terms with him, and they in consequence advised him to proceed to the city. Cesare replied that in accordance with their recommendation he should dismiss at Cesena and Imola a part of his troops, for, as he should join theirs (his only object being to give peace to the duchy), these, together with his own escort, would be sufficient; but that this pacification was impossible if his former friends continued so distrustful as to submit the settlement of their mutual interests to agents. The confederates admitted the correctness of his opinion, but did not the less hesitate to agree to his request. Vitellozzo in particular evinced a distrust that nothing seemed able to overcome, though he at last consented to meet the duke, — much rather from a wish not to appear more timid than his companions than from any confidence he felt in the sincerity of the friendship of Borgia.

Their decision was conveyed to the duke upon his arrival at Fano, the 20th of December, 1502. He immediately summoned eight of his most faithful adherents, amongst whom were M. d'Enna, his nephew, Michelotto, and Ugo de Cardona, and ordered them, upon their arrival at Sinigaglia, when they observed Oliverotto, Gravina, Vitellozzo, and Orsino advancing to meet him, to place themselves, as a mark of respect, side

by side with them, two to one, so that upon a given signal they could either arrest or stab them. Then describing to each the chief he should accompany, he recommended them not to quit him until they should arrive at the quarters prepared for them at Sinigaglia; after which he directed his soldiers to assemble eight thousand strong upon the banks of the Metauro, — a little river of Umbria, which flows into the Adriatic, and near which Asdrubal was defeated. The duke arrived at the appointed rendezvous upon the 31st of December, and sent forward immediately two hundred horsemen and the infantry, which he followed with his men-at-arms, coasting the Adriatic, having on his right the mountains, and upon his left the sea, though at times the road was so narrow that the army could not advance with more than ten abreast in front. After a four hours' march, the duke, at a turn of the road, perceived Sinigaglia situated about a mile from the sea; a bow-shot from the mountains, a little river flowed between the city and the army, the banks of which it was requisite to follow for some time in their descent; at last he found a bridge thrown across it, opposite to one of the quarters of the city. Here the duke ordered the cavalry to halt; the cavalry being drawn up in two files, the infantry defiled between, entered the city, and were stationed in the principal square.

To admit the entry of the duke's army, Vitellozzo, Gravina, Orsino, and Oliverotto had cantoned their soldiers in the environs; the latter alone had retained about a thousand foot and a hundred and fifty horsemen in a barrack near to the suburb through which the duke passed. Scarcely had Cesare approached the city, when he observed Vitellozzo, the Duke of Gravina, and Orsino advancing to meet him, — the last two suffi-

ciently gay and unsuspecting, but the first so sad and depressed that it seemed as though he had foreseen his fate. Indeed, this seemed to be the case; for, upon quitting his army, he had bidden his soldiers farewell, as if never destined to rejoin them, and had committed his family to the protection of his officers, shedding tears as he embraced his children, — a weakness which appeared strange on the part of so brave a soldier. Valentinois advanced and extended his hand in a manner so frank and loyal that Gravina and Orsino no longer doubted his sincerity; Vitellozzo alone remained as dejected as before.

In the mean time the trusty agents of the duke had obeyed his instructions, taking their places on the right and left of their victims, excepting Oliverotto, whom the duke, not perceiving, sought for with much anxiety, until he observed him exercising his troops in their quarters. He immediately sent Michelotto and M. d'Enna with instructions to induce him to withdraw his troops into their quarters, lest quarrels should arise between the duke's soldiers and his own, and then to join his companions, who were now with Cesare. Oliverotto, betrayed by his destiny, made no objection, and, escorted by them, immediately galloped toward his friends. As soon as he drew near, the duke held out his hand, and advanced toward the palace prepared for him, leaving his victims in the rear.

Cesare alighted and made a sign to the leader of his men-at-arms to await his further orders; he then entered, followed by Oliverotto, Gravina, Vitellozzo, and Orsino, each attended by their acolytes; but scarcely had they reached the apartments when the door was closed upon them, and Cesare, turning round, exclaimed, "The hour is come!" whereupon each of the confederates was

seized, and with the dagger at his throat, obliged to surrender up his arms. Immediately after, Cesare opened the window, gave the preconcerted signal to the commander of his men-at-arms, who proceeded directly to the barracks wherein the troops of Oliverotto were quartered, and these, being thus surprised, were made prisoners to a man.

The troops then pillaged the city, and Machiavelli was summoned to the presence of the duke. Their interview lasted two hours, during which Cesare expressed his pleasure at the success of his stratagem, which would destroy at a blow the enemies of the king, of the Florentine republic, and of himself, and put an end to all cause of dissension and future strife in Italy, — concluding with two requests: that the republic should advance its cavalry toward Bergo, for the purpose, if need were, of marching with him upon Cartello and Perugia; and, secondly, that it would authorise the arrest of the Duke of Urbino, should he take refuge within the Florentine territory on hearing of the detention of Vitellozzo. Upon Machiavelli's objecting that, with respect to the latter, it would compromise the dignity of the republic, and therefore never could be agreed to, Cesare approved of his decision, and added that it would be sufficient if he were detained, and not set at liberty without his consent.

The same night eight men in masks descended into the dungeons in which the prisoners were confined, who thought the fatal hour had struck for them all. But the executioner's duty for the present was limited to Vitellozzo and Oliverotto. When their sentence was announced to them, Oliverotto burst forth into violent reproaches against Vitellozzo, declaring he had induced him to rise in arms against the duke; as for Vitellozzo,

Portrait of Nicolo Machiavelli.

Original Etching by William Unger.

UNIV OF MICH.

he merely prayed the Pope would grant him a plenary indulgence for his sins. They were then led out beyond the ramparts of the city, strangled, and their bodies thrown into two graves already prepared for their reception. The fate of the others was only retarded until news arrived of the arrest of Cardinal Orsino by the Pope, upon which Gravina and Orsino were similarly strangled.

The duke quitted Sinigaglia upon the execution of Vitellozzo, leaving some instructions to Michelotto, and assuring Machiavelli that his only desire had been to restore peace to the Romagna and Tuscany, and that he thought he had gained his object in thus putting to death those who had been the cause of all the troubles by which their territories had suffered; that, as for any future revolts, they would be as sparks that a drop of water might extinguish.

No sooner was the Pope aware of the success of his son's stratagem than, anxious to play his own part, he sent (although it was midnight) to acquaint the Cardinal Orsino that Sinigaglia was taken, and invited him to come in the morning and converse with him upon the good news. In consequence, at an early hour, Orsino went on horseback to the Vatican; but at the corner of the first street he met the governor of Rome with a detachment of cavalry, who congratulated him upon the accident which had made them thus companions, and accompanied him to the door of the palace; here the cardinal alighted, and ascended the staircase, which he had hardly done before his mules and retinue were seized. He also, upon entering the hall, found himself suddenly surrounded by the guards, who led him to another hall, where he found the Abbé Alviano, the prothonotary Orsino, Giacomo Santa Croce, and

Rinaldo Orsino prisoners also; and at the same time the governor received orders to take possession of the château of Monte Giardino, belonging to the Orsini, and to bring away all the jewels, silver plate, and whatever valuable property it contained. This order was most conscientiously obeyed, — everything, even to the cardinal's account-books, being brought to the Vatican.

Two items particularly struck the Pope upon inspecting the accounts: the first was an entry of two thousand ducats due to the cardinal, but without the name of the debtor; the second, that, three months before, the cardinal had purchased, for fifteen thousand Roman crowns, a costly pearl, not forthcoming among those his Holiness now had in his possession; whereupon he gave orders that until the cardinal's accounts were properly balanced, the men who twice a day brought food to the prisoner should not be allowed to enter the castle of San Angelo. Upon the same day the cardinal's mother brought the two thousand ducats, and his mistress, in man's clothes, the missing pearl; but the Pope was so struck by her beauty under that disguise that he restored it to her at the price she had originally given. The Pope moreover allowed food to be conveyed to the cardinal, prepared in such a manner that he died, poisoned, upon the 22nd of February; that is to say, two days after his accounts had been examined and corrected. Upon the evening of his decease, the Prince de Squillace took possession of his territories in the name of the Pope.

In the mean time the Duc de Valentinois marched upon Citta-di-Castello and Perugia, which he took without a blow. Sienna alone remained, in which Pandolfo Petrucci, the last of the confederates, had taken refuge; but Sienna was under the protection of the French, and

beyond the dominions of the Church. Cesare was content to exact, therefore, the retirement of Petrucci to Lucca, which was done; whereupon, the Romagna being entirely subjected, he resolved to return and assist the Pope in the destruction of what yet remained of the Orsini.

Prior to this, the attention of Louis of France being engaged by some reverses he had experienced at Naples, Cesare seized successively upon Vicovaro, Palembera, Sanzano, and Cervetti, and having thus extended the papal States from the frontiers of Naples to those of Venice, he marched to Rome, intending to consult his father upon the means of raising his dukedom into a kingdom. He came in time to divide with Alexander the inheritance of the Cardinal Giovanni Michele, who had just died, poisoned by a cup he had received from the Pope. He found his father preoccupied also by an important speculation; he had decided upon creating nine cardinals upon the approaching solemnity of St. Peter, from which the following advantages would accrue: first, the benefices of the new cardinals would revert to the Pope, who would sell them; next, the nine selected would purchase the dignity, more or less dearly, according to their means, — the price, left to the Pope's discretion, would vary from ten thousand to forty thousand ducats; lastly, as cardinals, having lost the right of bequest, the Pope became their successor. He had only to poison them, and he became their heir; placing himself in the situation of the butcher, who, in want of money, has only to slaughter the fattest sheep of his flock.

The nomination took place, the nine cardinals were elected, the price of their simony was paid, and their vacant benefices were sold. The Pope now selected

those it was requisite to poison. The number was fixed at three: Cardinal Casanova, Melchiore Copis, and Adriano Castellense, who had taken the title of Adrien de Corneto, and who, by his numerous offices, had amassed an immense fortune. When these points were settled between Cesare and the Pope, they invited their select party of guests to sup with them at a villa near the Vatican, belonging to Cardinal de Corneto; and early in the morning they sent thither their *maître d'hôtel,* to make the requisite arrangements, and Cesare, at the same time, gave to the Pope's butler two bottles of wine prepared with a white powder, resembling sugar, whose fatal properties he had so often tested, — desiring him at the same time not to serve it but upon his orders, nor to any but those whom he should specially mention. On this account the butler had placed the wine upon the sideboard, apart from the rest, and particularly desired the servants not to touch it, it being specially reserved for the Pope's use.

Toward evening Alexander quitted the Vatican on foot, leaning upon Cesare's arm, and accompanied by Cardinal Caraffa; but as the heat was great, and the ascent was somewhat steep, upon reaching its summit, he stopped for a few minutes to recover himself; which he had hardly done when, putting his hand to his breast, he found he had forgotten a gold chain and a medallion, which latter contained a consecrated wafer. It was his custom to wear this suspended to his neck, owing to an astrologer's prediction that so long as he wore the consecrated host, neither steel nor poison could affect him. Deprived, therefore, of his talisman, he desired Caraffa to return immediately to the Vatican, and bring it to him without delay. Then, as the walk had made him thirsty, still making signs of haste to the cardinal,

he turned toward a servant, and desired him to bring some wine; and Cesare gave a similar order. Now, by strange fatality, it happened that the butler had returned to the Vatican for some fine peaches which had been sent as a present to the Pope, and which he had forgotten; the servant upon this spoke to the under-butler, saying that his Holiness and the duke, being thirsty, had desired some wine. Whereupon, observing two bottles placed apart from the rest, and having heard they were reserved for the Pope, he gave one to the servant, with two glasses upon a salver, and this wine the Pope and his son took, without the slightest supposition that it was of the vintage reserved for their guests.

In the mean time Caraffa had reached the palace, and, familiar with its interior, entered the apartments of the Pope, a candle in his hand, but unaccompanied by any domestic. As he entered a corridor, the wind extinguished his light; but, directed as he had been where to find the medallion, he advanced. Upon opening the door of the room, he fell back with a cry of terror; for before him, between the door and the table upon which the chain was, he saw Alexander VI. stretched motionless and livid on a bier, at the four corners of which were lighted flambeaux. He stood for a moment petrified by fear, unable to advance or to retire; but, thinking it probably the effect of his imagination, or caused by the agency of the Evil One, he made the sign of the cross, whereupon all disappeared, and then, although a cold sweat burst from every pore, he advanced to the table, and returned with the medallion. He found the guests assembled, and the Pope, who was extremely pale, the moment he appeared, came forward to meet him; but upon stretching out his hand to receive the medallion, he fell back and uttered a loud cry, which

was instantly followed by the most violent convulsions; and a few minutes afterward, as he advanced to his assistance, Cesare was seized with the same symptoms. They were carried side by side to the Vatican, to their separate apartments, and from that hour they never met again. The Pope was now attacked by a violent fever, which defied all the resources of medical skill, and rendered requisite the administration of the last sacraments of the Church; yet, owing to the excellence of his constitution, he struggled for eight days against death, — eight days of agony, at the expiration of which he died, without once mentioning either Cesare or Lucrezia, the two pivots upon which had revolved both his affections and his crimes. He died at sixty-two, after a reign of eleven years.

As for Cesare, whether he had taken less of the fatal liquid than his father, or whether the strength of his youth overcame the strength of the poison, or whether, according to some, he had, upon reaching the Vatican, immediately swallowed an antidote known only to himself, he was less violently affected. He did not, however, for a moment lose sight of his dangerous situation, but summoned his faithful Michelotto, with those of his men upon whom he could chiefly rely, and distributed them throughout the anterooms, and ordered their chief not to quit the foot of his bed, but to sleep upon his coverlid with his hand upon the hilt of his sword.

The remedies adopted for Cesare were the same as those for the Pope, except that they added extraordinary baths, which Cesare had himself directed to be prepared, having heard that in a similar case they had cured King Ladislaus of Naples. Four posts were erected in his room, firmly fixed in the floor and ceiling, similar to the machine used for shoeing horses; every day a bull

was brought in, thrown upon its back, and tied by its limbs to the posts. An incision was then made in its stomach about one foot and a half in length, through which the intestines were extracted, and Cesare then entering, while the body yet palpitated with life, enjoyed a bath of blood. He was then wrapped in warm cloths, by which, after profuse perspiration, he felt in general relieved. Every two hours, notwithstanding his own state, he sent to inquire about the Pope, and when he heard that he was dead, resuming that energy and presence of mind which were habitual to him, he desired Michelotto to close the doors of the Vatican, and to allow no one admission to his apartments until he was master of his father's gold and the papers he had left.

Michelotto obeyed, and sought instantly the Cardinal Casanova, placed a dagger at his throat, and made him surrender the keys of the rooms and the cabinets of the Pope; and, guided by him, he took away two chests of gold, to the value of one hundred thousand Roman crowns, and a great quantity of jewels, silver plate, and precious vases, all of which were carried into Cesare's apartments; the guards were then doubled, and the gates of the Vatican being reopened, the death of the Pope was announced.

This, although expected, nevertheless was a matter of extreme dread to the city, for Cesare's state of health kept every one in a fearful suspense. Had he indeed been sitting sword in hand upon his war-horse, events would never have appeared uncertain or indecisive; but he was confined to his bed, and although the thought to plan remained, the power to execute was gone, and he was obliged to submit and follow the course of events, instead of governing circumstances by his will.

The enemies he had most to fear were the Orsini and Colonnas: the one family he had robbed of life, and the other of possessions; he addressed himself, therefore, to those to whom he could restore what he had taken, and opened negotiations with the Colonnas. In the mean time arrangements were made for the papal obsequies; the vice-chancellor had summoned the different superiors and minor orders of the clergy, on pain of being deprived of their dignities, to repair in their respective costumes to the Vatican, whence the body was to be conveyed to St. Peter's for interment. They found upon their arrival the body abandoned by every retainer, for every Borgia, Cesare excepted, had concealed himself, — and wisely; for shortly after, Fabio Orsino, meeting one by chance, instantly stabbed him, and in sign of the mortal hatred he had sworn, washed his hands and mouth with his victim's blood.

So great was the excitement which prevailed at Rome that at the moment when Alexander's body was borne into the church, there arose one of those uncertain and vague rumours which in times of commotion produce so violent an effect upon the public feeling. The guards drew up in order of battle, the clergy sought shelter in the sacristy, and the Pope's body, from the fear of its bearers, fell upon the steps, whilst, the people tearing aside the coverings, all could gaze with impunity upon him who but fifteen days since had been, from one extremity of the world to the other, the cause of fear to princes, kings, and emperors. Nevertheless, by impulse of that religion of the grave which every one instinctively feels, and which survives all other feelings, even in the heart of the atheist, the body was taken up and placed before the high altar, and there exposed to the public view; but the Pope's body had become so black,

so deformed and swollen, that it was fearful to gaze on, and, owing to its rapid decomposition, no one now drew nigh to offer the last customary marks of religion and respect. Toward seven in the evening, — that is, when the decline of day adds its subduing spirit to the silence of the church, — some workmen carried the body to the chapel where it was to be interred, and, removing from it the funeral decorations, placed it in a common niche destined for its reception. On the morrow the following was found written upon his tomb: —

> " Vendit Alexander claves, altaria, Christum;
> Emerat ille prius, vendere jure potest."

> " The keys, the altar, and his God he sold;
> He had a right to sell, who bought with gold."

CHAPTER VIII.

By the effect the death of Alexander produced at Rome, we may estimate its influence, not on Italy only, but on the world. For a moment Europe was shaken, as the column which sustained the vault of the political edifice crumbled into pieces, and the star around which all had revolved was extinguished; and for an interval darkness and silence prevailed. But as the feeling died away, all who had an injury to avenge appeared, and rushed to the quarry. The Orsini and other nobles obtained possession of their estates; but the Romagna remained faithful, for the people had never been so happy as under the government of Cesare. As for the Colonnas, they agreed to remain neutral, having regained their estates in better condition than prior to their expulsion, the Pope having fortified and adorned them.

Cesare still remained writhing, like a wounded lion, upon his bed of torture, protected by his troops, whilst the cardinals, whose fears were subsiding, had begun to assemble, either at the Minerva or at the palace of Cardinal Caraffa. But, still alarmed at the forces which remained under the command of Michelotto, they raised at their own expense an army of two thousand soldiers under Charles Taneo, with the title of Captain of the Sacred College, hoping thus that peace would be preserved, when they heard that the forces of Prospero Colonna and of Fabio Orsino had entered Rome, at the interval of one day only between the two arrivals, — such was their mutual eagerness and rivalry.

Thus five armies were encamped at Rome in presence of one another: Cesare's, which held the Vatican and the Borgo; the Bishop of Nicastro's, at the castle of San Angelo, that of the Sacred College, and those of Prospero Colonna and of Fabio Orsino, the one quartered at the Capitol, the other at Ripetta. Thus situated, at the instance of the cardinals the ambassadors of Germany, France, Spain, and of Venice, assembled, and for the purpose of insuring the public safety, ordered the Orsini, the Colonnas, and the Duc de Valentinois, to quit Rome. The Colonnas and the Orsini obeyed; Cesare alone remained. He was willing, he said, to go, but upon conditions; and if they were refused, he declared that, the cellars of the Vatican being mined, he would blow himself up with those who advanced to seize him. It was, therefore, agreed that he should withdraw unmolested with his army, artillery, and military stores, and that he should be supported by a troop of four hundred infantry, in the pay of the Sacred College, to enforce obedience to these terms. On his part Cesare engaged to retire ten miles from Rome during the sitting of the conclave, which was similarly promised by Fabio Orsino and Prospero Colonna.

The duke quitted Rome by the gate of the Vatican; he reclined upon a bed covered with a scarlet canopy, borne by twelve of his halberdiers. His lips were livid, and his eyes bloodshot; beside him was his drawn sword, and near his litter his war-horse caparisoned in black velvet with his arms emblazoned; he was surrounded by his troops with pikes and halberds elevated, but without their customary music; thus an impressive funereal character was given to the procession, which at the gates of the city was joined by Prospero Colonna, who awaited it with a considerable force. Cesare's first thought was

on all sides, without regard to the sacredness of the spot, but in vain, so excellent were the discipline and tactics of his troops. Unable to force the castle of San Angelo, they hoped to have greater success by returning to the attack at the gate Torione, but this movement had been foreseen, and they found it barricaded and guarded. They did not, however, abandon their design; and, having surprised the outposts, they set the gate on fire, and advanced into the gardens of the castle, where Cesare awaited them, at the head of his cavalry.

In the presence of danger, the duke's energies revived; he threw himself upon his enemies, calling loudly upon Orsino, in order to slay him if they met; but either Orsino heard not the challenge, or declined the combat; so that, after an obstinate struggle, Cesare saw his unequally matched forces cut to pieces, and, notwithstanding a display of the greatest personal courage, was obliged to re-enter the Vatican. He found the Pope expiring; tired of a contest with him, upon his promise given to the Duc de Valentinois, the Orsini, through Pandolfo Petrucci, had bribed the surgeon of his Holiness, who had placed a poisoned plaster upon a sore in his leg. He was at the point of death, when, pursued by his enemies, and covered with dust and blood, Cesare entered his apartments; the Pope raised himself in his bed, gave him the key of the corridor, leading to the castle of San Angelo, and an order to the governor to receive and defend him to the last extremity, and to allow him to quit the fortress when he desired.

Cesare took his daughters and the youthful dukes of Sermoneta and of Nepi, and led them to the last refuge which remained. The same night the Pope expired, after a reign of only twenty-six days. At the moment of his death, at about two in the morning, Cesare, who

had thrown himself upon his bed, heard the door of his room open, and not knowing what could cause this visit at such an hour, he raised himself upon his side and grasped his sword; but at a glance he recognised his nocturnal visitor,—it was Giuliano della Rovere. Half-consumed by poison, abandoned by his troops, fallen from his high estate—he, who could do nothing for himself, could make a Pope! Giuliano came to purchase his votes. Cesare proposed the terms; they were accepted. Elected Pope, Giuliano should aid Cesare to recover his estates; Cesare was to remain general of the Church; and Francesco Maria della Rovere, Prefect of Rome, was to marry one of Cesare's daughters. Upon these terms Cesare sold his votes to Giuliano.

On the 31st of October, 1503, Giuliano della Rovere was elected Pope; and his first care upon his enthronement was to recall Cesare, who, now recovering his health, began also to occupy himself with the recovery of his domains and power. In fact, the defeat of his army, his retreat to the castle of San Angelo, where he was now supposed to be confined, had already produced great changes in the Romagna. All the towns of this extensive district had either revolted or returned to the sway of their former possessors, the citadels excepted, which in all cases had remained faithful to the Duc de Valentinois. Thus it was not the defection of the towns, which might readily be reconquered, that disturbed the Pope or Cesare, but it was the claim of right that Venice had advanced toward them; for, freed from her eternal enemies, the Turks, Venice had begun to push her troops toward the Romagna, which she had always coveted, and had placed them under the command of Jacopo Venieri, who had failed in an attack upon Cesena, owing to the courage of its citizens; but this failure had been compensated by

the surrender of the fortresses of Val de Lamone, Faenza, Firlempopoli, and of Rimini, which Pandolfo Malatesta exchanged for the lordship of Citadella, in the territory of Padua, and the rank of a Venetian noble.

Cesare now proposed to the Pope to make a temporary cession of his estates to him, that thus the respect the Venetians bore to the papal authority might save the cities from their attacks; "but," says Guicciardini. "the Pope, in whom ambition, so natural to sovereigns, had not entirely stifled every feeling of probity, declined it, fearing to yield subsequently to the temptation of their retention." Meanwhile, as the danger was urgent, he proposed to Cesare to quit Rome, to embark at Ostia, and proceed by sea to Spezzio, where Michelotto was to join him at the head of one hundred men-at-arms and a hundred light-horse, the remains of his splendid army, and thence advance by land to Ferrara and Imola, where, once arrived, he should sound his battle-cry, so that it should be re-echoed throughout the Romagna. It was advice after Cesare's heart; he instantly accepted it, and the resolution was ratified by the decision of the Sacred College.

Cesare felt at last free; once more he anticipated the pleasure of mounting his war-horse, and commanding an army in the places where he had already fought; when, upon reaching Ostia, he was overtaken by the cardinals of Sorrento and Volterra, who now asked in the Pope's name the cession of those very fortresses which three days before he had declined. It arose from the circumstance that, the Venetians having made fresh conquests, the Pope perceived Cesare's scheme to be the only one that could arrest their further progress. But Cesare now in his turn declined their cession; distrustful of this sudden change, and, fearful it might conceal some snare,

he declared the Pope's request to be useless, since he trusted to be in the Romagna within eight days. On the following morning, as he stepped on board the galley, he was arrested in the Pope's name. For a moment he felt that he was lost. Well acquainted with the process in such cases, he knew how short is the passage from the prison to the tomb, — a passage which in his case would be very simple, since, if the Pope willed, there was no deficiency of pretexts to form a charge against him. But the heart of Julius II. was of a temperament different from his own, — sudden in anger, but open to clemency; so that, upon his return to Rome in custody of his guards, the irritation caused by his refusal had abated, and he was received by the Pope in his palace with his accustomed courtesy, although it was easy to perceive that he was watched.

In return for this reception, Cesare consented to the cession of the fortress of Cesena, as a town which, having belonged to the Church, should revert to it; whereupon the Pope, placing this act, signed by Cesare, in the hands of Pietro Oviedo, ordered him to go and take possession of the fortress in the name of the Holy See. Pietro Oviedo obeyed, and, empowered by this act of cession, he presented himself before Don Diego Chignone, a Spanish *condottiere*, who held the fortress in the duke's name; but, after perusing the paper, Don Chignone replied that, knowing his lord and master to be a prisoner, it would be base for him to obey an order most probably obtained by violence; and that as for the bearer of it, he deserved death for having undertaken so disgraceful a commission; and therefore he ordered his soldiers to seize upon Oviedo, and throw him down from the battlements, which order was obeyed upon the spot.

This act of fidelity proved nearly fatal to Cesare, for,

upon hearing of the death of his officer, the Pope was so excited that for the second time his prisoner gave himself up for lost; he was therefore the first to propose terms, which were drawn up as a treaty, and rendered valid by a bull. By these Cesare was bound to cede within forty days the fortresses of Cesena and of Bertinoro, and to countersign the order for the surrender of Forli, and this upon the guarantee of two bankers of Rome, who were bound in a sum of fifteen thousand ducats, the amount of the expenses which the governor alleged had been incurred in the place upon the duke's account. Upon his part, the Pope agreed to conduct Cesare to Ostia under the guard only of the Cardinal St. Croix and of two officers, who should set him at liberty upon the completion of his engagements; but in case of their non-fulfilment, Cesare would be reconducted to Rome, and confined in the castle of San Angelo.

Still, fearing that even after the cession of the fortresses Julius II. might violate his promise and detain him prisoner, Cesare made application through the Cardinals Borgia and Remolino, who had retired to Naples, for a pass to Gonsalvo de Cordova, and two galleys to enable him to rejoin him; the safe-conduct arrived, and a courier announced that the galleys would not be long delayed. Upon this, and hearing that by the duke's orders the governors of Cesena and of Bertinoro had given up these fortresses to the captains of his Holiness, the Cardinal St. Croix relaxed by degrees the severity of his restraint, and permitted him, aware that he would soon be set at liberty, to go out without a guard. Fearful, therefore, of another detention at the moment of his embarkation, he concealed himself in a house beyond the city walls, and at nightfall, mounting a peasant's horse, he gained Nettuno, where, hiring a

small bark, he set sail for Monte Dragone, and thence reached Naples. Gonsalvo welcomed him with so much cordiality that Cesare was deceived, and thought himself safe at last. This confidence was redoubled when, upon his relating his designs to Gonsalvo, having stated that he trusted to gain Pisa, and thence to pass into the Romagna, Gonsalvo allowed him to enlist at Naples as many soldiers as he desired, promising also two galleys to enable him to embark with them. Thus deceived, he remained six weeks at Naples, in daily communication with Gonsalvo upon his plans. But the governor had detained him only to gain time to acquaint the King of Spain that his enemy was in his power; so that, confident even to the moment of his embarkation, all his preparations made, Cesare returned to the castle to take leave of Gonsalvo.

Gonsalvo received him with his usual courtesy, wished him every prosperity, and embraced him at parting; but at the gate of the castle, one of Gonsalvo's officers, named Nuño Compejo, arrested him in the name of Ferdinand the Catholic. He was immediately carried to prison, hopeless of all aid, for the only devoted friend he now had was Michelotto, and he too had been arrested at Pisa by orders of Julius II. The morning after his arrest, May 27, 1504, he was taken on board a galley, which set sail for Spain, where, upon his disembarkation, he was confined in the castle of Medina-del-Campo. Ten years subsequent to this, Gonsalvo, proscribed in his turn, avowed at Loxa, upon his death-bed, that two actions of his life then burdened his conscience, — the one his treason toward Ferdinand, the other his betrayal of Cesare.

The Duc de Valentinois remained two years in prison, always hoping that Louis XII. would reclaim him from

his captors as a peer of France; but the king, paralysed by the loss of the battle of Garigliano, which deprived him of the kingdom of Naples, was too much occupied with his own to think of the interests of his cousin. He began to despair, when, breaking one morning the loaf supplied for his breakfast, he found therein a file, a phial containing a narcotic liquid, and a note from Michelotto, to acquaint him that, having escaped from prison, he had followed him into Spain, and was now concealed with the Count of Beneventuni, in the adjoining village; he added that from the next day the count and he would await his arrival every night upon the road from the fortress to the village, with three fleet horses, and that therefore it was for him to avail himself of the means placed at his disposal. Thus, when the world had abandoned the Duke of Romagna, a *sbirro* was faithful in misfortune.

Freedom was too great a boon for Cesare to neglect; the same day he used the file upon the bars of the window, which opened upon an inner court, and had soon so loosened it that it required but a slight blow to detach it. But, besides that this was seventy feet from the ground, the entrance to the court was by a private door reserved for the governor, of which he alone had the key, which never quitted his possession; here was then the principal difficulty. But, prisoner as he was, he had been invariably treated with the respect due to his rank, dining every day with the commandant, who received him at his table with the manners of a noble and courteous gentleman. Don Manuel being also an old captain, having honourably served King Ferdinand, whilst still obeying his orders, yet felt a great respect for his prisoner, whose stories of his battles he listened to with pleasure. He insisted that Cesare should sup as well as

dine at his table, which hitherto he had refused fortunately, as, owing to this, he had been enabled to obtain the tools supplied by Michelotto. Now it happened on the day they were received, Cesare, going up to his room, made a false step and sprained his foot; at the dinner hour he tried to come down, but pretended to suffer so much that he gave up the attempt. In the morning he was no better; the governor visited him as before, but, finding his prisoner low-spirited and wearied by his solitude, he offered to come and sup with him. Cesare accepted this offer very gratefully.

It was now for the prisoner to act the part of the host; Cesare's manner was, therefore, animated and courteous; and the governor, profiting by this circumstance, spoke to him upon the subject of his arrest, and as an old Castilian, for whom honour had still its charms, inquired as to the truth of the imputed breach of faith of Ferdinand and Gonsalvo. Cesare showed every willingness to explain the matter, but indicated by a sign that the servants should retire. This precaution appeared so natural that the governor desired them to withdraw. Cesare filled his glass and that of the governor, and proposed the health of the king. He then commenced his narrative, but hardly had he done so ere the eyes of his host became fixed as by magic, and he fell upon the table in a profound sleep.[1]

[1] The poison of the Borgias, according to contemporaneous authors, was of two sorts, — the solid and the liquid. The first was a kind of white meal, almost impalpable, having the taste of sugar, which was called *cantarelle*. Its composition is unknown. The liquid (according to the accounts given of it) was prepared in too singular a manner to be passed over in silence: we but relate what has been written, fearful that modern science may negative the circumstances recorded. A bear was made to swallow a strong dose of arsenic; then, at the moment it began to act, he was sus-

Upon the return of the servants, they found the two guests one upon the other beneath the table; which not being an event sufficiently extraordinary to induce them to pay any particular attention to it, they contented themselves by carrying Don Manuel to his chamber, and by placing Cesare upon his bed; then, closing the door with the greatest care, they left the prisoner alone. For a moment he remained motionless, as if plunged in the deepest sleep; then, as he heard the steps echo in the distance, he raised his head, glided from his bed, walked toward the door, slowly, it is true, but without appearing to suffer by the injury to his foot; then raising his head proudly, he seemed to breathe freely for the first time since the departure of his keepers.

There was no time to lose; Cesare fastened the door as firmly within as it was secured without; he put out his lamp, opened the window, and removed its bars. This done, he took off the bandages from his limb, tore the curtains from his window and from his bed, and cut them into strips, adding to this his sheets, table-cloth, and napkins. By these he formed a kind of rope of about sixty feet in length, with knots at intervals, tied it firmly to the bar yet remaining in the window, and then descended, grasping it firmly by his feet and hands. He reached its extremity without an accident, but as he hung by its last knot he sought in vain for the earth with his feet, — the rope was too short. His situation was fearful; the darkness of the night rendered it impossible for him to ascertain the distance from the ground, and his fatigue cut off all hopes of being able to reascend.

pended by his hind feet; convulsions quickly succeeded, and a copious deadly stream of foam was discharged from the animal's throat. It was this, collected in a silver plate, and kept in a bottle hermetically sealed, that formed the liquid poison.

He hesitated for a moment, let the cord go, and fell about fifteen feet to the earth. His peril was too great to permit his noticing a few contusions he had received; he arose immediately, and, guiding himself by the direction of his window, went direct to the door opening from the court; here he stopped, a cold sweat stood upon his brow, for — whether he had forgotten it in his room or had lost it in his fall he knew not — he had not the key! Recollecting himself, he was soon convinced that the latter was the only probable cause of its loss; he therefore traversed the court, endeavouring to find the place where it could have fallen; but the key was so small, and the night so dark, that he almost despaired of success; but, nevertheless, as upon this now depended his safety, he redoubled every effort he had made. A door suddenly opened, and a patrol advanced, preceded by torches; he now thought escape impossible, but, recollecting a cistern which was behind him, he immediately plunged into it, leaving his head only above the water, and anxiously followed the movements of the soldiers, who passed within a few steps of him, crossed the courtyard, and disappeared through another door. Short as was the interval, Cesare's eye had espied by the light of their torches the key so long desired; and hardly had the door closed upon the soldiers when he was master of his liberty. Halfway from the castle to the village two men on horseback, with a horse ready saddled, met him; these were the count and Michelotto; Cesare grasped the hands of both, and immediately galloped toward the frontiers of Navarre, which he reached in three days, and where he was warmly welcomed by the king, Jean d'Albret, the brother of his wife.

From Navarre, Cesare had calculated on passing into France, and thence, with the aid of Louis XII., on

making an attempt for the recovery of his estates in Italy; but during his captivity the king had made peace with Ferdinand of Spain; so that upon hearing of his escape, instead of assisting him, as he had a right to expect, he deprived him of the duchy of Valentinois and of his annuity. But there yet remained to him two hundred thousand ducats with the bankers of Genoa; he wrote to desire the transmission to him of this sum, with which he hoped to raise some troops in Spain and Navarre, and thus to attack Pisa. Five hundred men, two hundred thousand ducats, his name, and his sword, were more than was requisite still to justify the indulgence of hope. The bankers denied the deposit.

Cesare was at the mercy of his brother-in-law. One of the vassals of the King of Navarre had just then revolted; Cesare assumed the command of the troops that Jean d'Albret sent against him, followed by Michelotto, the faithful companion of his prosperity and misfortunes. Owing to his courage and excellent arrangements, the Prince Alarino was at first defeated; but, rallying his forces soon after, he renewed the engagement. It was obstinately maintained for nearly four hours, when, toward dusk, Cesare wished to decide the battle by charging himself at the head of a hundred men-at-arms, against a corps of cavalry which formed the main force of the enemy; but, to his great surprise, they fled in the direction of a little wood, wherein they seemed desirous to take refuge. Cesare pursued them to its outskirts, when suddenly they faced about, and three or four hundred archers rushed from its coverts to their assistance. Cesare's troops, perceiving that they had fallen into an ambuscade, immediately fled, and basely abandoned their commander. Though left alone, he would not recoil one step; he had probably become weary of life, and his

heroism was perchance as much the result of disgust as courage. Whatever it might proceed from, he defended himself like a lion at bay; but, pierced with arrows and crossbow bolts, his horse fell with him, and rolled over upon his leg. His opponents immediately rushed upon him, and one, thrusting at him with a sharp-pointed spear, pierced his corselet, and ran him through the chest. Cesare uttered a blasphemy against Heaven, and died.

The enemy, however, owing to the courage of Michelotto, was defeated; but, upon returning to the camp, he heard from those who had deserted Cesare that he had not since been seen. Too well assured, from the known courage of his master, that he had fallen, he wished to give the last sad proof of his attachment, by rescuing his body from the wolves and birds of prey. He caused torches to be lighted, and, accompanied by a dozen of those who had pursued the cavalry with Cesare to the wood, he commenced his search for his master's body. On reaching the spot, they found five men lying dead side by side; four were yet in their armour, but the fifth was entirely stripped. Michelotto alighted from his horse, raised the head upon his knee, and by the light of the torches recognised the Duke of Romagna. Thus fell, on the 10th of March, 1507, upon a field of battle now unknown, near an obscure village called Viana, and in a miserable skirmish with the vassals of a petty prince, he whom Machiavelli has held up to the respect of princes, as a model of address, of policy, and of valour.

Lucrezia, the beautiful Duchess of Ferrara, died full of years and honours, adored by her subjects as a queen, and addressed by Ariosto and Bembo *as a goddess.*

THE COMTESSE DE SAINT-GERAN.

THE COMTESSE DE SAINT-GÉRAN.

CHAPTER I.

TOWARD the close of the year 1639, a party of horsemen arrived, about noon, in a little village at the extremity of Auvergne, from the direction of Paris. The country people assembled at the noise, and recognised the provost of the district and his attendants. The heat was overpowering, the horses were wet with sweat, the riders were covered with dust, and appeared to be returning from some important expedition. One of the escort, detaching himself from the rest, inquired of an old woman, who was spinning at her door, whether there was any inn in the place. This woman and the children pointed out to him a sign hanging above a door, at the bottom of the only street in the village; and the party once more put itself in motion. Among these horsemen was observed a young man of noble mien, richly dressed, who appeared to be a prisoner. This discovery redoubled the curiosity of the crowd, and the peasants followed the cavalcade to the door of the inn. The landlord came forward, cap in hand, and the provost demanded of him, with an air of authority, if his paltry town was sufficiently large to accommodate his party, man and beast. The host replied that he had the best

wine in the country to offer to his Majesty's servants, and that there would be no difficulty in collecting in the neighbourhood sufficient litter and provender for their horses. The provost listened with an air of incredulity to these magnificent promises, gave the necessary orders to his followers as to how they should dispose of themselves, and dismounted from his horse with a muttered oath, drawn from him by the heat and fatigue. The horsemen placed themselves closely round the young man; one held his stirrup, and the provost made way for him with deference as he entered the inn. There could be no further doubt that he was a prisoner of importance, and every one began to wonder who he could be. The men asserted that it must have been some great crime for which a young gentleman of such quality had been permitted to be arrested; the women, on the contrary, maintained that it was impossible that any one with so noble an air should be otherwise than innocent.

In the interior of the inn all was in an uproar: the assistants hurried from cellar to garret; the host swore and despatched his servants to the neighbours; while the hostess scolded her daughter, who remained motionless at the window of the little parlour, gazing at the handsome young man.

There were two tables in the principal room of the village inn. The provost went to the one, and gave up the other to the soldiers, who left the room, one by one, to look to their horses, stabled in a shed in the courtyard; he then seated himself on a stool, opposite the prisoner, and, striking the table with his heavy cane, commenced a conversation with him.

"Ah!" cried he, with a groan of weariness, "I ask your pardon, Monsieur le Marquis, for the miserable wine I am compelled to offer you."

" Then, turning to the young girl, he gaily drank her health."

Photo-Etching. — From Painting by Edmund Garrett.

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The young man smiled gaily.

"The wine matters not, Monsieur le Prévôt," he answered, "but I do not conceal from you that I regret our halt; for, however entertained I may be with your company, I am in haste to escape from my ridiculous situation, and anxious to reach our destination, the sooner to put a stop to this foolish affair."

The host's daughter, who was approaching the table, carrying a pewter pot, fixed her eyes at these words upon the prisoner, with a satisfied look which seemed to say, "I knew that he was innocent."

"However," continued the marquis, raising his glass to his lips, "this wine is not so bad as you say, Monsieur le Prévôt."

Then, turning to the young girl, who was staring at his gloves and embroidered ruff, he gaily drank her health.

"But," said the provost, who was astonished at this easy indifference, "I trust you will excuse your poor accommodation for the night."

"What!" said the marquis, "are we to sleep here?"

"Monsieur," replied the provost, "we have sixteen long leagues to go; our horses are knocked up; and as for me, I declare to you that I am no better than my horse."

The marquis beat impatiently upon the table, and showed all the signs of great vexation. The provost, in the mean time, sighed with pain, stretched out his immense boots, and wiped his forehead with his handkerchief. He was big and pursy, with a puffed-up face, and not made for the endurance of more than ordinary fatigue.

"Monsieur le Marquis," he continued, "although your company, to return your compliments, is very

agreeable to me, you cannot doubt that I wish to enjoy it upon a better footing. If it is in your power, as you say, to deliver yourself from the hands of the law, it is my fervent desire that you may soon do so. But I beseech you to consider in what a state we are. For my part, it is impossible that I can continue in the saddle one hour longer to-day; and you yourself, are you not oppressed with this long ride in such hot weather?"

"I must confess that I am," said the marquis, affecting to let his arms fall wearily to his side.

"Well, then, let us rest here for the night; we will sup, if we can, and start again to-morrow, with renewed strength, in the freshness of the morning."

"So let it be, then," replied the marquis; "but let us pass the time in a creditable way. Here are two pistoles, for these brave fellows to drink with. It is but right that they should regale at my expense, since it is on my account they have so much trouble."

He threw two pieces of gold upon the soldiers' table, who shouted in chorus, "Long live the marquis!" The provost rose, went out to post sentinels, and thence returned to the kitchen, where he ordered the best supper that could be obtained. The soldiers procured dice, and began playing and drinking. The marquis hummed a tune, curling his moustache, pirouetting round the room, and looking here and there, unobserved by them; then, drawing softly a purse from a concealed part of his dress, as the girl of the house came and went, he threw his arms around her neck as if to embrace her, and, sliding ten louis into her hand, he whispered in her ear, "The key of the outer door in my chamber, and a couple of bottles to the sentinels, will save my life."

The girl drew back to the door, and returned an expressive look, seeming to say yes to his request. The

provost came in, and two hours afterward the supper was ready. He ate and drank like a man who can support fatigue better at table than on horseback. The marquis plied him with bumpers, and, sleep aiding the fumes of some tolerably strong wine, he began to nod and half close his eyes.

"*Morbleu!* Monsieur le Marquis, I cannot believe you to be such a great villain as they say; you seem to me rather to have the air of a good fellow."

The marquis thought him quite drunk, and began to coax the girl of the house; but, to his great disappointment, when the hour came for him to retire, the provost summoned his sergeant, gave him his instructions in a low voice, and declared loudly that he would himself have the honour to conduct M. le Marquis to his bedroom, and that he would not go to rest until he had rendered him that duty. Accordingly, with three of his men carrying lights, he accompanied the marquis to his room, and, having made himself perfectly acquainted with its situation, he left him with ceremonious respect.

The marquis threw himself, booted as he was, upon his bed, and listened to a clock which was striking nine. He heard the noise of the horsemen, moving to and fro in the stables and the courtyard.

An hour later, however, as every one was fatigued, all had sunk into silence. Then the prisoner softly rose, and, groping along, sought upon the chimney, the table, and in the pockets of his clothes, for the key which he expected to find. It was not there. Nevertheless, he could not be mistaken in the tender interest of the young girl; he could not believe that she had been making game of him. The marquis's chamber had a window which looked out upon the street, and a door opening upon a crazy wooden gallery, which formed the

balcony, and from which the staircase descended through the most frequented rooms of the house. This gallery extended along the courtyard, at the same height from the ground as the window. The marquis's only alternative, therefore, was to leap either from the one or the other, and he remained a long time in doubt which course to adopt. He had almost made up his mind to throw himself into the street, at the risk of breaking his neck, when a gentle knock was heard at the door. He started with joy, and as he opened it said, "I am saved." An indistinct shadow glided into the room; it was the girl, trembling in every limb; she had not the power of uttering a word. The marquis reassured her by his caresses.

"Ah, monsieur," said she, "I shall die if they discover me."

"But," answered the marquis, "your fortune is made if you effect my escape."

"God is my witness that I would do so with all my heart; but I have such bad news — "

She stopped, overwhelmed with conflicting emotions. The poor girl had come to him with bare feet, fearful of the noise of her shoes being heard, and was shivering with cold and terror.

"What is it?" inquired the marquis, impatiently.

"Before he went to bed," continued she, "the provost ordered my father to deliver to him all the keys in the house, and made him swear a solemn oath that he had retained none. My father has given him all; and, more than that, there is a sentinel placed at every door of the house; but they are very tired. I overheard them murmuring, and I gave them more wine than you told me."

"They will fall asleep," said the marquis; "and, at

any rate, it is a great piece of good fortune that they have granted to my quality the privilege of not bolting me into this room."

"There is," said the girl, "a passage from the garden, leading into the fields, which is closed only by a gate of no great strength; but — "

"Where is my horse?"

"In the stable, doubtless, with the others."

"I shall jump into the yard."

"You will kill yourself."

"So much the better!"

"Ah! Monsieur le Marquis, what can you have done?" said the girl, sadly.

"Trifles! hardly anything; but for which they will take away my life and my honour. I must lose no more time; I am decided."

"Stay," cried the girl, catching him by the arm; "at one corner of the yard there is a large heap of straw; the gallery runs above it — "

"Admirable! I shall make less noise, and do myself less injury."

He made a step as if to depart; the young girl, without knowing what she did, endeavoured to prevent him, but, disengaging himself from her hold, he opened the door of his room. The moon was shining brightly upon the yard, and not a sound was to be heard. He advanced nearly to the end of the wooden balustrade, and discovered the dunghill, which was of considerable height; the girl made the sign of the cross. The marquis listened attentively, and, hearing nothing, mounted upon the balustrade. He was about to jump, when suddenly deep, muttered voices came upon his ear. They proceeded from two horsemen, who were conversing together over a bottle of wine. The marquis held

his breath as he regained his door, where the girl was waiting upon the threshold.

"I told you before that it was not yet time," said she to him.

"Have you a knife," said the marquis, "that I may plant it in the throats of these rascals?"

"Wait, I beseech you, wait one hour, only one hour," murmured the girl, "and in that time they will be asleep."

The hour passed, and the marquis once more opened the door. He heard no sound but the distant baying of dogs in the adjacent country, breaking the deep silence. He leant over the balustrade, and distinctly saw a soldier lying, with his face to the ground, upon some straw.

"Should they awake?" whispered the girl, with emotion.

"At all events, they shall not retake me alive; be calm," said the marquis.

"Farewell, then," said the sobbing girl, "and may Heaven protect you!"

He mounted the balustrade, crouched down for a moment, and dropped upon the straw.

The girl saw him run to the shed, saddle a horse, mount it, pass behind the walls of the stable, rush through the garden, spur his horse against the barrier, overturn it, and gain the open country.

The poor girl stood transfixed at the end of the gallery, with her eyes fixed upon the sleeping horseman, ready to disappear at the slightest movement. The noise of the spurs upon the pavement, and the horse's hoofs at the bottom of the court, had half roused him. He started up, and, fearing some surprise, ran to the stable. His horse was not there; the marquis, in the haste with which he fled, had taken the first that came,

and it happened to be this soldier's. He immediately gave the alarm, and his comrades awoke. Running to the prisoner's room, they found it empty. The provost was roused from his bed, confused and irritated. The prisoner was gone. The girl, who pretended to have just risen in consequence of the noise, impeded the preparations, concealed the harness, and, under pretext of assisting the horsemen, did everything in her power to delay them; nevertheless, in a quarter of an hour the whole troop were in full pursuit. The best horses took the lead, and the sentinel, who had mounted the marquis's horse, and had the greatest interest in the capture of the prisoner, having been the principal cause of his escape, advanced considerably before his companions. He was followed by the sergeant, equally well mounted; and as they could see, from the height, by which way he had flown, in a few minutes the fugitive, although at a great distance, was in view.

The marquis meanwhile lost ground; the horse upon which he was mounted was the worst in the troop, and he had already pushed it to its utmost speed. Turning round, he saw the soldiers within gunshot of him. In vain he attempted to spur his horse to increased exertion; breathless and exhausted, it stumbled and fell. The marquis rolled with it upon the ground, but, in the act of falling, he grasped the saddle, and perceived for the first time that the holsters were furnished with pistols; he remained lying by the horse as if insensible, with a loaded pistol in his hand. The man who was mounted upon his own valuable steed, and who was about two hundred paces in advance of his sergeant, was the first that came up. The marquis rose, and, before he had time to make any defence, shot him through the head; the horseman fell, and in an instant the marquis

had thrown himself upon his own horse, without putting his foot in the stirrup, spurred it into a gallop, and disappeared like an arrow, leaving the sergeant about fifty paces behind him, thunderstruck at what he saw.

The rest of the party came up at a gallop, and, seeing the soldier lying in the road, cried out that he was taken. The provost shouted to them, with a stentorian voice, not to kill him; but, on reaching the spot, they discovered that it was the sergeant endeavouring to succour the unfortunate soldier, whose skull was horribly fractured, and who had been killed on the spot.

By this time the marquis was out of sight; fearful of a new pursuit, he had struck into a crossway, on which he proceeded for an hour without drawing bridle. Having almost cleared the boundaries of the district, and being convinced that, by this time, he was beyond the reach of his poorly mounted pursuers, he resolved to halt, to refresh his horse. He was riding through a narrow path, when he saw a peasant advancing toward him; throwing him a sou, he inquired of him the way to the Bourbonnais. The man picked up the money, and replied to his question, but appeared hardly to know what he was saying, and gazed earnestly at him with an amazed countenance. The marquis ordered him to pass on his way; but the peasant planted himself in the middle of the path, and would not move a step. The marquis advanced upon him in a menacing manner, and asked him how he dared have the insolence to gaze at him in that manner?

The peasant, by way of reply, pointed to the shoulder and collar of the fugitive, who now observed for the first time that his doublet was soiled with blood, which, joined to his disordered dress, and the mud with which

he was covered, gave him a sufficiently frightful appearance.

"I know what it is," said he; "my servant and myself were separated this morning in an encounter we had with some drunken Germans; and whether it be that I am a little scratched, or that, in collaring one of the rascals, I have transferred some of his blood to my own clothes, I know not, except that this comes of the prank. However, I do not feel at all the worse."

So saying, he affected to laugh heartily.

"Nevertheless," continued he, "I should have no objection to make myself decent; and I am exhausted with thirst and heat; my horse, too, is no better off than myself. Can you inform me where I can refresh myself?"

The peasant offered him the use of his own house, which was at no great distance. A woman and her children, who were working, discontinued their labours, from respect, and went in search of the refreshments he required; wine, water, and fruit, together with a large piece of black bread, were set before him. The marquis sponged his doublet, drank a deep draught, and, calling the people of the house, began to question them with apparent indifference. He again obtained information as to the various roads which led to the Bourbonnais, whither he was travelling to take refuge with a relative, — the different villages, cross-roads, and distances; and, from speaking of the country, the crops, and such matters, he proceeded to inquire if anything of importance had lately occurred in the neighbourhood.

The peasant replied that "he was astonished there should have been an encounter upon a road which was at that time covered with soldiers, who were about to make an important capture."

"Who is it?" inquired the marquis.

"Oh!" said the peasant, "it is a gentleman accused of great crimes."

"What! a gentleman in the hands of justice?"

"Yes, indeed, and who stands a good chance of losing his head!"

"What has he done?"

"Oh, the most abominable things! The whole country is in a ferment about it."

"Do you know him?"

"No; but we have his description."

As this information was rather alarming, the marquis, after having asked some further questions of the same sort, and thrown some silver to the peasant, mounted his horse, and disappeared in the direction pointed out to him.

The provost had advanced by this time half a league further, although he knew the pursuit to be all but hopeless; he despatched one of the soldiers with directions that descriptions of the fugitive, and orders for his apprehension, might be sent to all quarters of the province, and returned himself to the village from which he had started. Some of the marquis's kinsmen lived in that neighbourhood, and he thought it probable that he would conceal himself with them. The whole village ran out to meet the returning party, who were compelled to confess that they had been outwitted by the handsome prisoner. The country people received this intelligence with different feelings, and it occasioned a great sensation. The provost returned to the inn in high ill-humour, striking his fist on the table, and venting his spleen upon everybody that came in his way; while the girl of the house, relieved from the most torturing anxiety, could hardly conceal her joy.

The provost threw his papers upon the table, as if to nourish his vexation.

"The greatest rascal in the world!" he cried. "Why was I not more suspicious?"

"He had such a noble air!" said the hostess.

"An infernal villain! Do you know who he is? He is the Marquis de Saint-Maixent."

"The Marquis de Saint-Maixent!" cried she, with horror.

"Yes," replied the provost, "the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, accused, and almost convicted, of uttering false money and of sorcery."

"Ah!"

"Guilty of the crime of incest!"

"Good heavens!"

"Of having strangled his wife in order to marry another woman, whose husband he had formed a scheme to assassinate!"

"The saints preserve us!"

All crossed themselves.

"Yes, good people," continued the furious provost, "this is the amiable nobleman who has made his escape from the punishment due to his crimes."

"And is there no hope of catching him?" inquired the host.

"But little, I fear, if he has taken the road to the Bourbonnais; for in that province there are many noblemen of his family, who will not suffer him to be retaken."

The fugitive, in fact, was no other than the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, who was accused of all the enormous crimes laid to his charge by the provost, and who, by his audacious flight, rendered himself once more able to take an active part in the strange story which we have yet to relate.

CHAPTER II.

A FORTNIGHT after these events, a horseman rang the bell of the château de Saint-Géran, in the neighbourhood of Moulins. The hour was late, and the inmates did not seem in haste to open the gate. The stranger kept the bell in motion, as if he had been master of the château, and at last saw a man running toward him from the bottom of the avenue. The servant reconnoitred him through the grate, and being able, in the dusk of the evening, to distinguish only a disordered traveller, with clothes covered with mud, and no sword, inquired of him what he wanted. The stranger replied, coolly, that he wished to see the Comte de Saint-Géran, and that he was in haste. The servant informed him that it was impossible; upon which the stranger grew angry.

"Who are you?" inquired the domestic.

"Fool!" cried the horseman, "have done with your nonsense! Go to M. de Saint-Géran, and tell him that the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, his kinsman, wishes to see him immediately."

The servant was profuse in his apologies, opened the gate, and then hastened in advance of the marquis. He proceeded to announce his arrival to the master of the château. The count was going to supper when thus interrupted; he immediately rose to receive the marquis, embraced him several times, and gave him a most friendly reception. He wished to hurry him immediately into the supper-room, and to introduce him to his

family; but the marquis pointed out to him the state of his dress, and begged to be allowed a few minutes to put himself in order. The count conducted him to his apartment, where he made him dress himself from head to foot in his clothes, and whilst so doing, they entered into conversation. The marquis told some story, we know not what, relative to the accusation against him. But whatever it was, the count continued to testify great interest in behalf of his kinsman, who found that he might calculate upon the château de St. Saint-Géran as a place of refuge. When he had finished dressing, he followed the count, who introduced him to the countess and the rest of the family.

It is now necessary that we make our readers acquainted with the inmates of the château; and, in order to render the following circumstances more intelligible to them, that we go back to certain circumstances which preceded the commencement of our story.

The Maréchal de Saint-Géran, of the noble house of Guiche, and governor of the Bourbonnais, had married Anne de Tournon, by whom he had a son, Claude de la Guiche, and a daughter, who married the Marquis de Bouillé. On the death of his wife he entered into a second marriage with Suzanne aux Épaules, who in like manner was the widow of the Comte de Longaunay, to whom she had given a daughter, Suzanne de Longaunay.

The marshal and his lady, Suzanne aux Épaules, for the mutual advantage of their first children, resolved to make a match between them; and, accordingly, Claude de la Guiche, son of the marshal, was married to Suzanne de Longaunay.

This proceeding gave great vexation to the Marquise de Bouillé, the marshal's daughter, who was living in

seclusion with her mother-in-law; besides being, as she said, married to a man who gave her great cause of complaint, and whose only good quality was that he was seventy years of age.

The contract of marriage between Claude de la Guiche and Suzanne de Longaunay was executed at Rouen, on the 17th of February, 1619; but, owing to the extreme youth of the bridegroom, who was yet scarcely eighteen, he was sent on his travels to Italy. He returned at the end of two years; and, had it not been for the want of offspring, their marriage would have been, in every point of view, a most happy one. The countess was much afflicted on account of this sterility, which threatened the extinction of a great name and a noble family. She made vows and pilgrimages, consulted physicians and empirics; but all in vain.

The Maréchal de Saint-Géran died on the 30th of December, 1632, full of disappointment at not having any descendants from the marriage of his son. Claude, now Comte de Saint-Géran, succeeded his father in the government of the Bourbonnais.

In the mean time, the Marquise de Bouillé had been separated, by divorce, from the old marquis her husband, and had taken up her residence at the château de Saint-Géran, very much encouraged by the results of her brother's marriage, whose whole wealth she would succeed to in the event of his leaving no other heir, which at present seemed more than probable.

It was in this state of affairs that the Marquis de Saint-Maixent arrived at the château. Being young, handsome, lively, and agreeable, he found great favour in the eyes of the ladies, and even succeeded in pleasing the widow of the deceased Maréchal de Saint-Géran, who was living with her children. He soon saw plainly,

too, that he and the Marquise de Bouillé understood each other.

The fortune of the Marquis de Saint-Maixent was much impaired — almost ruined, indeed — by dissipation and judicial proceedings. The marchioness was the apparent heiress of the count; he calculated upon the speedy death of her husband; and the life of an old septuagenarian was not a sufficient obstacle to embarrass the plans of such a man as the marquis. He resolved to marry the marchioness, and thus become the wealthiest man in the province.

He began, therefore, to pay her all the attentions in his power, without exciting the suspicions of the rest of the family. It was, however, extremely difficult to make himself understood by the marchioness without drawing other eyes upon him. But she, being already prepossessed by his agreeable person, quickly understood him, though they had very few opportunities for confidential intercourse. The countess innocently took part in their conversations. The count frequently carried away the marquis to hunting-parties, and they generally spent the day together. M. de Saint-Maixent had not yet said that which every virtuous woman should be deaf to; and in spite of his manœuvres the intrigue crept but slowly on.

The countess, notwithstanding the lapse of twenty years, still clung to the hope that her prayers for an heir to her husband's name would be granted to her. She had confided, with unwearied credulity, in all sorts of quacks, who in those days obtained belief, even from people of quality. At one time she sent for a kind of astrologer from Italy, who, by the use of some horrible medicine, almost succeeded in poisoning her, and was obliged to fly for refuge to his own country, too happy

to escape so easily. This affair drew upon Madame de Saint-Géran the serious remonstrances of her confessor; till at length, by the assistance of time, she became accustomed to the painful conviction that she would never have a child, and sought consolation in the duties of religion. The count, who treated her with unvarying tenderness, had long since given up the hope of an heir, and had made his will accordingly. The expectations of the marchioness were now changed into certainty; and M. de Saint-Maixent, perfectly secure on his part, did not hesitate any longer with regard to his intentions respecting Madame de Bouillé. Such was the state of affairs when, about the end of November, 1640, the Comte de Saint-Géran was compelled, by some affairs of moment, to set off with all speed to Paris.

The countess, who could not endure the thought of being separated from her husband, proposed that she should accompany him. The marquis, delighted with the opportunity which would leave him almost alone in the château with Madame de Bouillé, represented the journey to Paris in such glowing colours that every one decided in favour of the plan. The marchioness, on her part, had been manœuvring with the same object. It was agreed, therefore, that the countess should accompany her husband; and, after a few days of preparation, they departed upon their journey.

The marquis had now no hesitation in disclosing his passion to its fullest extent, and found no difficulty in securing the hold which he already had upon Madame de Bouillé. He affected the most violent love, and she fully responded to his advances. They escaped the observation of the domestics by long walks, and would often pass the whole day in some retired corner of the park, or shut up in the apartments of the château. But

it was impossible that these doings should not give rise to certain rumours among a host of servants; and, accordingly, such rumours soon began to circulate.

The marchioness found it necessary to gain over, by means of bribes, her waiting-maids, — two sisters, of the name of Quinet. She had no great difficulty in effecting this object, for they were both devoted to her person. This was the first degradation of Madame de Bouillé, and the first step in the corruption of her creatures, who from this time became deeply engaged in a most infamous conspiracy. There was at the château de Saint-Géran an upper servant, a pompous, self-conceited personage, with just sufficient intelligence to be able to execute a bad action without the ability to devise one. This man was placed in authority over all the other servants; originally a poor peasant, whom the marshal had taken into his service, he had been promoted by the count, step by step, to the post of steward, on account of his long service in the family. He was thus, in the count's absence, left in charge of the servants and establishment. The marquis took this man apart, sounded him cunningly, gave him money, and gained him over completely. These several agents undertook to stop the gossip of the servants' hall; and from that time the lovers were able to carry on their intrigue without restraint.

One evening, as M. de Saint-Maixent and the marchioness were at supper *tête-à-tête*, they heard a loud ringing at the gate of the château, and presently a noise, to which they did not at first pay much attention. In the mean time a courier, who had arrived express from Paris, had already dismounted in the courtyard, with a letter from the Comte de Saint-Géran to the marquis. He was brought into the room, followed by nearly the whole establishment. The marquis inquired

the meaning of the turmoil, and made a sign of dismissal to the crowd of domestics; but the courier exclaimed that M. le Comte had given orders that the letter of which he was the bearer should be read to the whole house. The marquis opened it without reply, ran his eye over the contents, and, without the least alteration of manner, read it in a distinct and loud voice. The count announced to his good kinsfolk, and to his whole house, that the countess had at length shown the usual symptoms of being *enceinte;* that almost immediately upon her arrival at Paris these signs had begun to show themselves; and that there remained in the minds of the medical men no doubt as to her situation; that, as to himself, he was in the greatest joy at this event, which had ever been the height of his wishes. He directed, therefore, that all sorts of rejoicings should be immediately commenced; informed them that his letter would precede their arrival at the château only by a few days, and that the countess, for greater security, would be conveyed thither in a litter; and concluded by desiring various sums of money to be distributed amongst the domestics.

The servants shouted for joy; the marquis and the marchioness exchanged but one look, but that look was sufficient to express their feelings. They contained themselves, however, sufficiently to put on the appearance of great satisfaction; and the marquis even went so far as to congratulate the domestics upon their attachment to their master and mistress. The guilty pair, left by themselves, listened gloomily to the noise of fireworks, and sounds of music under the windows. They remained for some time in silence, musing on what they had heard. Their first reflection was that the count and countess were mistaken; that the symptoms of which

he wrote were common and insignificant; that it was impossible to suppose that anything of the sort should occur after the lapse of twenty years; and, in short, that it was a false alarm.

The next day they walked together in a solitary part of the park, and discussed the chances of their situation. M. de Saint-Maixent pointed out to the marchioness the enormous loss that this occurrence must occasion her; he then remarked that, supposing the news to be true, there were still several dangerous stages to be passed through. He trusted that no accident would happen to the countess, and that the *accouchement* might be successful. "The child may die," said he at last.

He went on to make some remarks upon the small evil that the loss of such a being, without mind, interests, or consequence, would be to the world. It was only, he said, "an ill-organised piece of matter. Yet why should we disturb ourselves?" continued he, impatiently; "the countess is not with child; it is not so — cannot be."

A gardener, who was working near them, overheard this part of their conversation, but, as they were walking away from him at the time, he was unable to hear anything more.

A few days after this some servants on horseback appeared at the château; they had been sent forward by the count, with the information that their master and mistress were only a little way behind. Accordingly they were quickly followed by the travellers. The countess was in the litter, and the count on horseback by her side. They were received in great triumph; all the peasantry had left their labours, and were rending the air with their shouts. The domestics ran out to meet their mistress; the oldest among them wept with

joy at seeing the count so happy, and at the thought that his noble qualities would now be perpetuated in his heir. The Marquis de Saint-Maixent and Madame de Bouillé did their best to assume the appearance of the joy which animated every one else.

The widow of the deceased Maréchal de Saint-Géran hastened to the château the same day; and she, who had expressed the greatest doubts of the intelligence, became now fully convinced of its truth. The count and his wife were very much beloved in the province; this event caused, therefore, general satisfaction, particularly in those numerous families who were attached to them by the ties of blood. During the two or three following days upwards of twenty ladies of quality arrived, in all haste, upon a visit to the château, to show how much they were interested in the condition of the countess. The usual symptoms had now become so manifest that no remaining doubt could be felt in the mind of any one, and the country physicians were perfectly agreed in opinion. The count retained one of these physicians at the château, and consulted with the Marquis de Saint-Maixent about procuring an experienced midwife, who, he also intended, should reside in the château. The count's mother, who was to give a name to the child, ordered the most expensive and magnificent presents to be prepared.

The marchioness, in the mean time, had stifled her vexation; and, amongst people who were blinded by their own joy, none perceived the feelings which preyed on her mind. She daily saw the marquis, who only augmented her disappointment and irritation by repeating that the count and countess were enjoying her misfortune, and by insinuating that this expected birth was a mere fabrication, invented in order to disinherit her.

He had begun, as usual in such cases, by corrupting the marchioness's mind, and gradually making her familiar with the idea of crime.

The marquis was one of those libertines, happily so rare in those times (which, after all, were not so bad as they have been called), who could turn the last discoveries in science to the account of atheism. It is worthy of remark that all the great criminals of that time, Sainte-Croix, for example, and Exili, the atrocious poisoners, were also the greatest free-thinkers, and had outstripped the most learned men of the day in the study of philosophy, as well as in the science of physics, from which they acquired the knowledge of the composition of their poisons. Passion, interest, and hate struggled in favour of the marquis in the breast of Madame de Bouillé; and she consented to all that he required of her.

The Marquis de Saint-Maixent had a man in his service, crafty, bold, and dexterous, whom he had sent for from his estates, — a confidential servant quite worthy of such a master. This man he had despatched on some business in the neighbourhood of Saint-Géran.

One evening, as the marquis was going to bed, the man returned from one of his expeditions, came into his apartment, and putting a paper in his hand, on which were written some names of places and persons, informed him that he had discovered the object of his search.

The next morning, at daybreak, the marquis had two of his horses saddled, pretending that an affair of importance called him home. Leaving word that he would be absent for three or four days, and begging that his apologies might be given to the count, he set off at full speed, followed by his servant. That night they slept at a small inn, on the road to Auvergne, in order to mislead people who might recognise them; then, travelling

by cross-roads, they arrived in two days at a large town in quite a different direction.

In the outskirts of this town there resided a woman who exercised the profession of midwife, but who, it was said, had mysterious and infamous secrets, which she made known to such persons as would pay her well for the information. At any rate, she made a large profit from the influence which her art gave her over credulous people. She professed to cure the cruels, prepared philters and love-potions, managed intrigues, and even practised sorcery for the country people about. She had, however, managed so well that her real character was but little known, except by those unfortunate persons who were as much interested in the preservation of her secrets as herself; and as her assistance was never given, except for a stipulated sum of money, she lived in tolerable prosperity, in a house which belonged to herself, and of which, as being more convenient for her proceedings, she was the only inmate. Moreover, she enjoyed a good reputation in her trade, and was held in great regard by many persons of high quality. The name of this woman was Louise Goillard.

As she was sitting alone one evening, she heard a violent knocking at her door. Accustomed to receive guests at all hours of the night, she took up her lamp and opened the door without hesitation. An armed man burst into the room, apparently in great agitation. Louise was so startled and terrified by this apparition that she fell into a chair: it was the Marquis de Saint-Maixent.

"Compose yourself, my good woman," said the stranger, interrupting her as she was about to speak. "Be calm, I pray you; it is not you, but I who should be agitated. I am no malefactor; and instead of your

having anything to fear from me, I am come to request your assistance."

He threw his cloak into a corner, unbuckled his belt, and laid aside his sword, then dropping wearily into a chair, he requested permission to take some repose.

The marquis wore a travelling-dress; and although he did not make himself known, Louise Goillard saw at a glance that he was far from being what she had at first believed, — that he was, on the contrary, a gentleman of quality whom her good fortune had brought there.

"I pray you to pardon me," said she, "a mistrust, which did you injustice. Your entrance was so sudden that I had not time to see whom I had the honour of receiving. My house stands in a solitary situation, I am alone, and there are people who would take advantage of these things to ruin a poor lone woman, who has no need of additional misfortunes, — times are so bad. You seem faint — shall I bring you a little wine?"

"Let me have only a glass of water."

Louise Goillard stepped into another room, and returned with water.

The marquis, having put it to his lips and seemed to drink, said, "I am come from a great distance, upon a matter of the utmost importance, and reckon upon your assistance."

He felt in his pocket, and drew from it a purse, which he passed to and fro in his hands.

"First," continued he, "I shall require you to swear that you will observe the strictest secrecy."

"It is not necessary with us," said Louise Goillard; "in our business it is always the first condition."

"I must have, however, stronger guarantees, — I must have your oath that you will reveal to no one what I am about to tell you."

"I give you my word, since you require it; but once again, it is unnecessary, — you do not know me."

"Consider that the matters of which I am about to speak are most important, — that it is as if I were placing my life in your hands; and that I would sooner sacrifice my own life a thousand times than that this secret should be revealed to any one."

"And you also will please to consider," calmly replied the woman, "that we ourselves have the greatest interest in the preservation of the secrets intrusted to us; that one indiscretion may lose us the confidence of our employers, and in some cases, perhaps — You may proceed without hesitation."

The marquis, much encouraged by her apparent sincerity, consented.

"I know you to be a very skilful woman."

"In your service I should wish to prove so."

"That you have carried the study of your art as far as possible."

"You have, perhaps, overrated the merits of your humble servant."

"And that, in your labours, you have discovered the means of knowing the future."

"In that you are mistaken."

"I have been told it as true."

"You have been deceived."

"Why should you deny it? Do you already refuse to be of use to me?"

Louise Goillard held out on this point for a long time: she could not believe that a man of his quality could give credence to her powers of prophecy, which she professed only to the common people and rich farmers; but the marquis appeared so serious that she knew not what to think.

"Listen," said he; "it is useless to attempt to deceive me — I know all. Be calm; we play a game with a thousand to one in your favour; and, besides, here is something, in the mean time, to make up to you for my importunities."

He laid a pile of gold upon the table. The woman feebly admitted that she occasionally made trials of astrological combinations, but that they did not always succeed, and that she had been led on so far solely by their connexion with the phenomena of her art. The secret of her nefarious practices was thus forced in its first intrenchments.

"If it is so," replied the marquis, "you must be already aware of my situation. You must already know that, hurried away by blind and ardent passion, I have betrayed the confidence of an old gentleman of quality, and violated the laws of hospitality by seducing his daughter in his own house, — that things are now come to extremity with me, and that this young lady, whom I love to distraction, being in a state which cannot longer be concealed, is on the point of losing her life and honour by the discovery of her fault, which indeed is mine."

The woman answered that nothing could be foreseen respecting any one, saving by particular interrogations; and to produce effect upon the marquis, she brought into the room a kind of box, covered with ciphers and strange-looking emblems. She opened it, and, having combined some figures which it contained, said that it was quite true, and that the marquis's situation was most unfortunate. With the view of frightening him, she told him that he was threatened with still greater misfortunes, but observed that it would be easy to foresee and counteract these events by means of consultations.

"Madame," answered the marquis, "there is but one thing upon earth that I dread, — it is the dishonour of the woman whom I love. Have you no means of remedying the usual embarrassments of an *accouchement?*"

"I know of none," said the matron.

"The young lady has managed to conceal her situation, and might lie in secretly."

"She has already endangered her life; and I will not consent, for fear of accident, to have any hand in this matter."

"Is it not possible," said the marquis, "to have an *accouchement* without suffering?"

"As to that, I know nothing. I would never think of any method which might thwart the designs of nature."

"You deceive me; you do know such a method, — you employed it upon a person whose name I could give you."

"Who has dared to traduce me in this way? In all my operations I am guided entirely by the decisions of the faculty. God forbid that I should be stoned by all the doctors in the country, or driven, perhaps, out of France!"

"Will you leave me, then, to despair? If I were capable of making a bad use of your secrets, I might do so already, for I know them. In Heaven's name, do not dissemble any longer, but tell me how it is possible to prevent the pains of delivery. Do you wish more money? Here it is."

He laid some pieces of gold upon the table.

"Stay," said the matron, "there is indeed a method of which I am the discoverer, and which, although never tried upon any one, I believe to be effectual."

"But if you have never yet used it, may it not be dangerous and hazard the life of the woman I love?"

"When I say never, I am wrong; I have used it once, and with complete success. Be calm."

"Ah!" cried the marquis, "I shall ever be grateful to you! But," continued he, "might it not be possible to prevent the *accouchement* altogether, and to cause the immediate disappearance of every symptom?"

"Monsieur, it is a great crime that you are talking of."

"Alas!" answered the marquis, as if speaking to himself in a paroxysm of grief, "I would rather deprive myself of a child, the pledge of our love, than introduce into the world an unfortunate being, who most likely would be its mother's destroyer."

"For the love of God, monsieur, speak no more of it; it is a horrible sin even to think of such a thing!"

"What! then, is it better to be the means of destroying two persons, and throwing, perhaps, a whole family into despair? Oh, madame, I implore you to save us from this misery!"

The marquis hid his face in his hands, and sobbed as though he were weeping violently.

"Your despair has moved me deeply," said the matron; "but consider that for a woman like me to be engaged in such a thing is as much as my life is worth!"

"Why do you talk of your life? Are not our secret, and our safety, our honour involved? Nothing could reach you till after the death and dishonour of all I hold dear in the world."

"In that case, perhaps, I can; but it will be necessary to forearm me against the annoyances of the law, and to insure me, if necessary, an easy escape from the kingdom."

"Let not that trouble you; take my fortune; take my life!" And he threw the whole purse on the table.

"In that case, and solely to save you from the great danger in which I see you are, I consent to provide you with a beverage, and some instructions, which will immediately deliver the lady from her burden. It will be necessary to use the strictest precautions, and that she study exactly the directions which I am about to give you. My God! nothing but the desperate emergency in which you are placed could induce me to — Stay!"

She took a flask from a cupboard, and continued:

"Here is a liquor which has never yet failed in effect."

"Ah, madame, you will save our honour, which is dearer to us than our lives! But this is not sufficient; tell me how and in what quantities this liquor must be administered."

"On the first day," replied the midwife, "the patient must take one spoonful; on the second, two; on the third — "

"I shall never remember all that: write me this prescription, I beg you, in my pocket-book."

The midwife hesitated a moment, but, as the pocket-book was opened, a bank-note for five hundred francs fell to the ground; the marquis picked it up and presented it to her.

"Take it," said he; "it is not worth the trouble of putting it back."

This last gift was so magnificent that any suspicions which yet remained in the mind of the midwife were removed, and she wrote the prescription in the marquis's pocket-book.

The marquis put the flask in his pocket, took the pocket-book from her hand, examined it to see if the instructions were complete, and then turned to the midwife with a diabolical smile.

"At last," cried he, "I have you!"

"What mean you, monsieur?" inquired the astonished woman.

"I mean," continued the marquis, "that you are an infamous witch, and a vile poisoner. I mean that I have here the proof of your guilt, and that you will either do what I command you, or perish at the stake"

"Mercy! mercy!" cried the woman, falling at his feet.

"My mercy rests with yourself," calmly replied the marquis.

"Speak! what must I do?" inquired the midwife; "I am prepared for everything."

"Listen, then; it is now my turn to tell my secrets, — but I shall be careful not to write them."

"Say on, monsieur; you shall have no reason to complain of my devotion."

"Sit down, then, and hear what I have to say."

The woman rose from her knees, and threw herself into a chair.

"So, then, I see that you understand me," said the marquis. "The prison, the torture, and the stake, or three times as much gold as I have already given you, — in short, your destruction or prosperity for the rest of your life."

The midwife's eyes recovered their brightness, and she bent her head, as if to signify that she was his, body and soul.

"There is," continued the marquis, fixing his piercing look upon the poor woman, — "there is, in a château about three leagues hence, a lady of quality, now some months gone with child. The birth of this child is hateful to me. You will have the charge of the *accouchement.* I will tell you what you must do,

and you will do whatever I tell you. It is necessary to set out this very night. You will accompany me. I have horses waiting within a short distance of this house, and I will leave you at a place where you will wait my orders. You shall be informed when the time of your service arrives, and in the mean time shall want for no comfort that money can procure."

"I am ready," answered the midwife, briefly.

"You will obey me in everything?"

"I will."

"Let us go, then."

She asked only for time to pack up a few necessaries; she put some things in order, locked her doors, and quitted the house with the marquis. A quarter of an hour afterward they were galloping along, in the middle of the night, without her knowing whither the marquis was taking her.

The marquis returned to the château three days afterward, and found the count's family as he had left them; that is to say, in the utmost excitement of hope and impatience for the delivery of the countess. He apologised for his sudden departure, alleging the importance of the business which occasioned it. While speaking of his journey, at dinner, he related the sensation which had been caused in the place from which he had returned by a surprising event, of which he had been almost an eye-witness. A lady of quality was suddenly taken with the pains of labour. All the skill of the doctors was at fault; the lady was about to perish; when at last, in despair, they ordered a woman who was much thought of in the country among the peasants, but who was little known among the higher orders, to be sent for. This woman presented herself modestly before them, mistrustful of herself. From her first remedies

the pains ceased, as if by magic, and in a few hours the mother was happily delivered of a most beautiful child; but, immediately upon its birth, she was seized with a violent fever, which almost brought her to the grave. It was then resolved to call in physicians, in opposition to the wish of the master of the house, who placed great confidence in the woman. Their treatment only increased the fever. Recourse was again had to the midwife, and in three weeks the lady was miraculously restored to health. "This occurrence," continued the marquis, "has confirmed the woman's reputation so completely that nothing is now spoken of in the town and its neighbourhood but her wonderful ability."

This story called to the minds of the company the condition of the countess. Her mother-in-law remarked that they were too apt wrongfully to despise these humble country practitioners, and that perhaps experience and sound sense discovered secrets to them which study and pride denied to the members of the faculty. The count agreed in this remark, and exclaimed that he would seek a midwife who should resemble the woman of whom they spoke. After this the subject was dropped, the marquis being the first to change the conversation; he was satisfied with having thus, without apparent design, sown the first seeds of his project.

After dinner the company walked upon the terrace. The count's mother, not being able to walk, owing to her great age, sat down on a bench, with the countess and Madame de Bouillé. The count and M. de Saint-Maixent continued walking together for a long time. The marquis naturally inquired whether all had gone on well, and if Madame de Saint-Géran had had any increase of indisposition during his absence; for her approaching *accouchement* had become the most engross-

ing subject in the family. By this inquiry the conversation was turned to its former channel.

"*Apropos*," said the count, "you talked, very opportunely, of a skilful midwife; would it not be possible to have her here?"

"I certainly think," answered the marquis, "that you could not choose better, and that in this neighbourhood there are none who can compare with her."

"I have a great mind to send for her immediately, and to retain her from this time in the service of the countess, by having her here before her assistance is required. She would the better understand the countess's constitution. Do you know where she is to be found?"

"Let me see," said the marquis; "she lives in some village, but I cannot remember where it is."

"Do you recollect her name?"

"Hardly; Louise Boyard, I think, or Polliard; I do not know which."

"What! have you not even retained the name in your memory?"

"I heard the story, and that is all. Who the devil can remember a name which passes in at one ear and out at the other?"

"Had you, then, no thought of the countess?"

"It is so far from hence that I never imagined you would wish to engage this woman. I thought you were already provided."

"How can she be discovered?"

"Easily enough; I have a servant who knows every corner of the country, who will not fail to find her; if you wish it, I will send him in search of the woman."

"If I wish it, do you ask? Certainly, this moment!"

The same evening the servant received his commis-

sion, the instructions of the count, and, above all, those of his master, and set off. Of course he had not far to go in search of his object, but he remained purposely away for three days, at the end of which time Louise Goillard was installed in the château.

She was a woman of a plain and simple appearance, and quickly gained the confidence of everybody. The machinations of the marquis and of Madame de Bouillé seemed now to be in the way of success, when an accident occurred, which had almost rendered them useless, and which, by nearly causing a great misfortune, would have had the effect of averting a great crime.

The countess, in going to her apartment, entangled her foot in a carpet, and fell heavily upon the floor. Alarmed by the cries of a servant, who had witnessed the accident, the whole household assembled. The countess was carried to bed, and all was dismay and terror. This accident, however, had no bad consequences, and only occasioned new visits from the neighbours, to prove once more their interest in her welfare. This took place toward the end of the seventh month.

At last the time of the countess's confinement approached. Everything had long since been prepared for the expected birth. The marquis had employed the interval in dissipating the scruples of Madame de Bouillé. He saw, too, Louise Goillard several times privately, and gave her instructions; but he knew that the corruption of the steward Baulieu was also necessary to his plans. Baulieu was already partly won by the presents he had received; a large sum of money and larger promises did the rest. The marchioness, in the mean time, by the instigation of M. de Saint-Maixent, was labouring to induce her maids, the sisters Quinet, to give their assistance to the abominable project. Thus

this excellent family were entirely surrounded by plots and conspiracies, carried on by those whom they most loved and trusted. The conspirators, thus prepared, impatiently waited their time.

On the 16th of August, 1641, the Comtesse de Saint-Géran was taken with the pains of labour in the chapel of the château, where she had been attending mass. She was carried to her room before its conclusion. The pains continued with the most frightful paroxysms. The count, in tears, listened to the agonised cries of his wife. Many persons were spectators of the scene. The two daughters of the marshal's widow by her second marriage, one of whom, aged sixteen, was afterwards married to the Duc de Ventadour, and appeared at the trial, had wished to be present on an occasion of such deep interest to this noble family. Besides these, there were Madame de Saligny, sister of the deceased Maréchal de Saint-Géran, the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, and the Marquise de Bouillé.

As it became evident that the pains increased without result, that the case was most dangerous, and that the countess was in a precarious state, expresses were sent to the neighbouring parish churches, to offer up prayers for the mother and child. At Moulins the holy sacrament was exposed in the churches.

The midwife alone attended the countess in her labour. She had pretended that, from this arrangement, she would be more at ease; her slightest wish was eagerly obeyed. The countess did not speak a word, and only interrupted the dismal silence by the most heart-rending cries. Suddenly Madame de Bouillé, who pretended to be busily occupied, remarked that the large company present disturbed the countess, and taking upon herself an air of authority, authorised by

seeming tenderness, she requested that every one should retire from the patient's bedside excepting those who were absolutely necessary for her attendance, and, that no one might imagine themselves excepted, she trusted that the count's mother would set the example. The count was thus drawn away from the melancholy scene, and every one followed the old lady from the sick-room. Even the countess's two waiting-maids were not permitted to remain, but were provided with employment elsewhere. It was represented as a cause for their removal that two young girls, the eldest hardly fifteen, ought not to be present on such an occasion. The only persons that remained, therefore, were the Marquise de Bouillé, the midwife, and the two sisters Quinet; and the poor countess was thus left in the hands of her most deadly enemies.

It was seven o'clock in the evening; the pains continued unabated. The count and his mother sent every minute for the latest intelligence, to which the answer that all was well, and that in a short time their hopes would be fulfilled, was invariably returned; but the entrance to the chamber was forbidden to all the domestics.

Three hours later, the midwife declared that the countess could not hold out without procuring some repose. She made her swallow a liquid, which she poured into her mouth by spoonfuls. Immediately afterward the countess fell into so deep a sleep that she appeared as if dead. The younger of the Quinets, believing they were about to murder her, began to cry in a corner of the room, but Madame de Bouillé brought her to reason.

During this fearful night, a shadowy figure glided through the corridors, silently crossed the salons, came as far as the door of the sick-room, and spoke in low

tones to the midwife and the marchioness. It was the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, who gave his orders, encouraged his people, watched every point of his plot, and was all the while a prey to those pangs which must accompany the perpetration of a great crime.

Owing to her great age, the count's mother was persuaded to take some repose. The count sat up, exhausted with fatigue, in a room within a few steps from the place where a set of fiends were working the ruin of all he held most dear.

The countess, while in this state of lethargy, was, unconsciously to herself, delivered of a boy, who thus fell, upon entering the world, into the hands of his enemies, without his mother ever having the means of defending him, by cries or tears. The door was opened, and a man, who had been waiting, entered the room; it was the steward Baulieu. The midwife, under pretence of paying the first attentions to the child, had turned aside with it into a corner. Baulieu observed one of her movements, and, throwing himself upon her, held her hand. The wretched woman attempted to force her fingers into its skull. He snatched the poor infant from her arms; but, all his life, the count's son bore the marks of her violence. The Marquise de Bouillé, perhaps, had not been able to resolve upon permitting her to commit so great a crime, but we think it more likely that the steward prevented it by the orders of M. de Saint-Maixent. The probability is that the marquis, doubting the fulfilment of the promise which Madame de Bouillé had made to marry him after the death of her husband, wished to preserve this child, as a means of compelling her to keep her word, by his having the power of threatening her with its production in the event of her proving false to him. At least,

there are no other apparent reasons for a man of his character taking so much care of his victim.

Baulieu, having snatched the child, put it into a basket, hid it under his cloak, and went in search of the marquis with his prey. They consulted together for some time, after which the steward went out by a side gate, which opened upon the moat of the château; thence he crossed a terrace, and over a bridge which led into the park. This park had twelve gates, to all of which he had the keys. He mounted a good horse, which he had in readiness hidden behind a wall, and went off at full gallop.

The same day he passed through the village of Escherolles, about a league from Saint-Géran, where he stopped at the house of a nurse, a woman of the name of Claude, by trade a glover, who suckled the child; but the steward, not daring to prolong his stay in a village so near Saint-Géran, crossed the river Allier at the Port de la Chaise; and, having once more dismounted at the house of one Boucaud, where the mistress of the house again gave the child its nourishment, he pursued his way toward Auvergne.

The weather was exceedingly hot, the horse was worn out, and the child seemed uneasy. A carrier happened to pass, who was on his way to Riom. This man's name was Paul Boithion; he was the ordinary carrier on this road. Baulieu made a bargain with him to convey the child in his cart, into which he himself mounted, holding it in his arms. The horse followed, tied behind.

In the conversation which he had with this man, Baulieu began to inform him that he should not take so much care of the child, if he did not belong to the first family in the Bourbonnais. He arrived about noon at

the village of Ché. The mistress of the house where they stopped, who had nurslings of her own, consented to give a little of her milk to the poor infant, who was covered with blood; she warmed some water, washed its head and feet, and dressed it properly.

The carrier took them with him as far as Riom. Arrived there, Baulieu got rid of him, and, making a false appointment with him, turned his horse's head in the direction of the abbey de Lavoine, and arrived at the village of Descoutaux, in the mountains between Lavoine and Thiers. In that place the Marquise de Bouillé had a château, to which she was in the habit of retiring from time to time. At Descoutaux the child was nursed by a woman of the name of Gabrielle Moinot, who, it was arranged, was to receive her payment a month in advance; however, it remained under her charge only seven or eight days, owing to her being refused the name of the father or mother, or any place to which she might address herself, to give intelligence of her foster-child. This woman having spread this story about, no other nurse could be found to take charge of the infant. It was, therefore, removed from the village of Descoutaux. The persons who carried it away took the road to Burgundy; and, as they passed through a country covered with wood, all further traces of them were lost.

These details were afterward proved by the nurses, the carrier, and other persons who were witnesses at the trial. We relate them so minutely because they were of great importance in the evidence. In the accounts of this case, from which we have gathered our facts, it has not been told how the steward's absence was accounted for at the château; but the marquis, doubtless, was provided with a sufficient pretext.

The lethargy of the countess continued until day-break. She woke very weak, but in a state of comfort, which convinced her she was eased of her burden. Her first words were of her child. She wished to see and to embrace him, and inquired where he was. The mid-wife answered her, with the greatest coolness, — so indifferently that the maids who were there were compelled to turn away, astounded at her effrontery, — that no *accouchement* had taken place. The countess asserted the contrary, and as she appeared greatly excited, the midwife, to calm her, assured her that the delivery would not be much longer delayed, and that, to judge from the symptoms observed during the night, she would most likely have a boy. This promise comforted the count and his mother, but failed in convincing the countess, who declared positively that her child was already born.

The same morning a servant maid met a woman descending to the brink of the moat of the château, carrying a parcel in her arms. She recognised the midwife, and inquired of her what she was carrying, and where she was going so early. She answered that the girl was very curious, and that it contained nothing of consequence; but, pretending to be angry with this reply, the girl opened one of the ends of the parcel, before the midwife had time to prevent her, and discovered several cloths, all covered with blood.

"Madame has, then, been brought to bed?" said she to the midwife.

"No!" answered she, hastily, "no such thing!"

"How can that be?" continued the servant, persisting, "since Madame de Bouillé, who was present, has said so."

"If she has said so," answered the midwife, quite confounded, "she has a very long tongue."

This girl's evidence was afterward one of the principal causes of the conviction of the criminals.

The irritation of the countess increased next day. She insisted, with cries and tears, that they would at least tell her what had become of her child, still asserting that she knew she was not mistaken in saying that she had been delivered. The midwife answered, coldly, that "the new moon was unfavourable to childbirth, and that they would have to wait its waning, — a more propitious period."

The opinions of sick people are not generally received with great confidence; nevertheless, the firmness of the countess would have convinced every one sooner or later, had not the count's mother remembered that, on one occasion of her being *enceinte*, toward the end of the ninth month, she too had shown all the signs of immediate confinement, although it did not take place till six weeks afterward.

This information restored some confidence. The marquis and Madame de Bouillé did all they could to make the family rest satisfied with it; but the countess continued to resist, and her continued transports of grief and agitation produced the utmost alarm.

The midwife, who no longer knew how to gain time, and was losing all hope, from the steadiness of Madame de Saint-Géran in her assertion, now resolved in her terror to destroy her. She persuaded the family that, in the peculiar situation of the countess, some violent exercise was necessary, and advised the countess to submit to it. The countess, still firm in her opinion, refused to concede to this advice; but the count, his

mother, and the whole family begged her so earnestly to agree to it that she yielded.

She was placed in a close carriage, and once every day was carried out, over the roughest and most difficult roads. Thus was she shaken about until she was quite breathless; and nothing but the very strong constitution which she possessed could have withstood this pain, in the delicate state of her health. She was carried back to her bed after this cruel drive; and seeing at last that no one would believe her assertions, she committed herself to Providence, and sought consolation in religion. Although the midwife had administered violent medicines under various pretences, still she withstood all these attempts on her life, and slowly recovered.

Time, which heals the greatest wounds, by degrees alleviated those of the countess; although for some time her grief broke out afresh upon the least occasion, she finally overcame it, until it was again revived by the events which we have still to relate.

There had been, previously to this, residing in Paris a fencing-master, who boasted that he belonged, through one of his brothers, to the service of a great family, and who was married to Marie Pigoreau, the daughter of a comedian. This man had died shortly before the commencement of our story, leaving his widow in a state of indigence, with the charge of two children. The woman Pigoreau was of a very doubtful character, and no one knew how she lived, when all at once, after several short absences, and repeated visits from a stranger in the evenings, with his face muffled in his cloak, it was remarked that she lived in greater comfort, and wore better clothes, and at last it became known that she was bringing up a strange child.

About the same time it was said that she had de-

posited two thousand livres in the hands of a tradesman in the neighbourhood, named Raguenet; and some days after this, they having doubtless delayed the baptism of the child for fear that its origin should be traced, Pigoreau undertook to have it christened at Saint Jean-en-Grève. She had not recourse to the neighbours to bring him to the font, and found means to produce a father and mother at the church. She took as godfather the grave-digger of the parish, named Paul Marmion, who called the child by the name of Bernard.

Pigoreau remained in a confessional during the ceremony, and gave ten sous to this man. The godmother was Jeanne Chevalier, a poor woman of the parish.

On the parish registry the following was written:

"On the seventh day of March, sixteen hundred and forty-two, was baptised Bernard, the son of —— and of ——; Paul Marmion, labourer and grave-digger of this parish, the godfather, and Jeanne Chevalier, widow of Pierre Thibou, the godmother."

A few days afterward Pigoreau put the child to nurse with an acquaintance of hers, residing in the village of Torcy en Brie, and whose husband was called Paillard. She told her it was a child of quality, who had been confided to her care, and that she would not hesitate, if he died, to redeem his life by the life of one of her own children. This nurse did not keep the infant long, as she fell sick; and Pigoreau placed the child with the widow of a peasant called Marc Peguin, who lived in the same village. The nurse's allowance was regularly paid in advance, and the infant treated in every way like a child of quality. Here also Pigoreau informed them of its noble birth, and that sooner or later it would make the fortune of those who had anything to

do with it. The child was often visited by a middle-aged man, who was believed to be the father, but who Pigoreau assured them was only her brother-in-law.

When the child was eighteen months old, Pigoreau again took it under her charge and weaned it. This woman had had two sons by her husband: the first was called Antoine; the second, who had he lived would have been named Henri, was born on the 9th of August, 1639, a short time after the death of his father, who had been killed in the month of June in the same year. Pigoreau determined to give to the stranger child the name and station of her own son, and thus to bury for ever in obscurity the secret of its birth. With this object she quitted the quarter where she had been residing, and took up her abode in a parish where she was unknown.

The child was brought up in this manner under the name of Henri, the second son of Pigoreau, until he attained the age of two years and a half; but at this period, whether it was that her engagement to keep him extended only up to this time, or that she had spent the two thousand livres, and further remuneration was refused her for its maintenance, — at any rate, she resolved to rid herself of her charge.

This woman had been heard to say that she had little anxiety about her eldest son, because she was quite certain as to the prospects of the second; and, when some one said to her that, being obliged to part with one of her children, she had better keep the second, who was a very fine child, she answered that that did not depend on her, as this child's godfather was an uncle in easy circumstances, who would take charge of him. She often talked about this uncle, her brother-in-law, who, she said, was steward in a great family. One morning

the porter of the hotel of Saint-Géran came to tell Baulieu that a woman, carrying a child, wished to see him at the gate. Baulieu, we must here explain, was the brother of the deceased fencing-master, and the father-in-law of Pigoreau's second son. It will therefore be guessed who the stranger had been who had given her the charge of the child of quality, and had been to visit him to the nurse's house. Pigoreau earnestly represented the hardships of her situation. The steward, much moved, took the child, and told Pigoreau to wait for him at a place which he pointed out at a short distance from the house.

Baulieu's wife exclaimed loudly against this increase to her family; but he succeeded in calming her, by representing to her the poverty of his sister-in-law, and the ease with which, in a house like that of the count, they might relieve her of the burden. He then went in search of his master, to request permission to bring up the child in the house. The count and countess were at first opposed to the proposal, remarking that as he already had five children, it would be imprudent in him to take upon himself this new burden; but he continued to implore them to allow it with so much earnestness that they finally consented to the plan. The countess wished to see the child, and as she was about to start for Moulins, she ordered him to be placed in the carriage with her women. When he was shown to her, she exclaimed involuntarily, "What a lovely child!"

He was indeed a beautiful boy, with fair hair, large blue eyes, and regular features. She caressed him a hundred times, and the child returned her caresses in an engaging manner.

When they arrived at the château de Saint-Géran, her tenderness for Henri (which name the child still

retained) increased. She would often gaze upon him with sadness, and then, embracing him tenderly, would hold him for a long time to her breast. The count shared her feelings for the pretended nephew of Baulieu, and he became in a manner adopted as their son, and educated as a child of quality.

The Marquis de Saint-Maixent and Madame de Bouillé were not married, although the old Marquis de Bouillé had been long since dead. It seemed as though this project had been given up. The marchioness was doubtless restrained by her scruples, while the marquis was indisposed to it by his dissolute habits.

It is believed that other engagements and enormous sums of money indemnified him for this broken promise.

The Marquis de Saint-Maixent had seduced a girl named Jacqueline de la Garde. This girl often heard him boast, as a clever intrigue, of having carried off the son of a governor of a province, and grandchild of a marshal of France; and, speaking of the Marquise de Bouillé, he had been heard to say that it was he who had made her wealthy, and that to him she owed her whole opulence. On one occasion, when he had taken Jacqueline to a beautiful spot, upon grounds belonging to himself, and she admired its situation, remarking that "C'était un beau lieu," he replied, laughingly, with a play upon words, that he "connaissait un autre Baulieu, qui lui avait procuré le moyen de faire une fortune de cinq cent mille écus."

In a journey to Paris along with Jadelon, Sieur de la Barbesange, the marquis allowed to escape from him that the Comtesse de Saint-Géran had been delivered of a son, who was then in his power.

The marquis had not seen Madame de Bouillé for a long time; their common danger once more brought

them together. They had both learnt with terror the presence of Henri at the hôtel de Saint-Géran. They consulted together upon this subject, and the marquis undertook to make matters safe. However, he dared not undertake anything rashly against the child; and his situation was the more difficult because, owing to some of his adventures having come to the ears of the Saint-Gérans, he was now upon very cold terms with the family.

Baulieu, the constant witness of the tenderness of the count and countess for little Henri, was a hundred times on the point of confessing all to them. He was torn with remorse. He frequently let fall words which he believed, from the length of time which had elapsed, would not have been noticed, but which were, nevertheless, observed. He sometimes remarked that he held in his hands the life and honour of Madame de Bouillé, and that the count and countess had more reasons than they knew for loving Henri. One day he laid before a clergyman the following question of conscience: Has a man, who has assisted in the abduction of a child, done enough to satisfy his conscience when he has restored it to its father and mother, without their knowing who it is? The answer of the priest is not known, but to all appearance the steward was by no means reassured by it. Upon being congratulated by an inhabitant of Moulins on having a nephew who received such kind treatment from his master and mistress, he replied that they might well love the child, for that it was very closely allied to them.

These expressions were remembered by other persons than those who had the deepest interest in them. One day a dealer in foreign wines came to offer for sale to Baulieu some Spanish wine, and gave him a flask to

taste as a sample. The same evening he was taken horribly ill. He was carried to his bed, where he lay writhing and uttering the most fearful cries. When his sufferings left him any reason, one single thought governed him, and in his agony he kept repeating that he wished to ask pardon of the count and countess for a great loss which he had caused them. The persons who surrounded his bedside replied that this was of little importance, and that he ought not to sadden his last moments with such reflections; but he continued to cry so piteously for them to come to him that some one went to inform them of his wish. The count, believing it related to some trifling loss, some small amount of money embezzled from the expenses of the house, and fearing to hasten the death of the unfortunate man by shame and the avowal of a fault, sent back word that he forgave him, that he might die tranquilly, and declined coming to see him. Baulieu expired shortly after, carrying his secret with him to the grave. This was in 1648.

The child was now seven years old, and the count and countess felt their love for him increasing with his growth; they had him taught dancing and fencing, clothed him in the dress of a page, and were served by him in that capacity. It was against him that the marquis now turned his machinations. He was scheming, no doubt, in his mind, a plot no less criminal than the preceding, when justice at last reached him through other enormous crimes of which he was accused. He was arrested one day, in the street, while talking to a servant of the Saint-Géran family, and was taken to the prison of the Conciergerie. Whether owing to his imprudent observations, or to the other indications which we have related, reports began to be current in

the Bourbonnais of the true state of the case; these confused rumours at length reached the ears of the count and countess, but they served only to renew their grief without offering any proof of the truth.

In the mean time, the count went to take the waters at Vichy, accompanied by the countess and Madame de Bouillé. Chance ordained that in this town they should meet with Louise Goillard the midwife. This woman renewed her acquaintance with the family, and paid frequent visits to the Marquise de Bouillé. One day, the countess coming suddenly into the apartment of the marchioness, found them conversing together in a low voice. Upon her entrance they immediately ceased, and appeared disconcerted.

The countess, although she saw their agitation, attached no importance to it, but inquired the subject of their conversation.

"Oh! nothing," answered the marchioness.

"If it is nothing, tell me what it is," said the countess, observing that they had both coloured.

The marchioness, in her confusion, could not find an answer, and felt her agitation increasing.

"Louise Goillard," said she at length, "was praising my brother for having received her so kindly."

"And why," said the countess, turning to the midwife, "should Louise Goillard have apprehended an unkind reception from my husband?"

"I feared," said the midwife, adroitly, "that he could not but entertain a bad feeling toward me after what passed when we believed you to be about to have a child."

The mystery of these words, and the agitation of the two women, instantly struck the countess with suspicion; she restrained herself, however, and did not carry the conversation further. Nevertheless, her emotion

did not escape the eyes of the marchioness. The next day she retired to her estate at Lavoine; this imprudent step, of course, only strengthening the suspicions of the countess.

The first resolution of the countess was to have Louise Goillard arrested; but she felt that, in an affair of such importance, nothing should be done without careful consideration. She consulted her husband and his mother, and it was determined to send for the midwife, and, without allowing her to suspect anything, suddenly to question her upon the subject. She hesitated and contradicted herself several times; besides which, her evident fright was alone a sufficient proof of her guilt. She was placed in the hands of justice, and the Comte de Saint-Géran made his charge against her before the vice-seneschal of Moulins.

The midwife, upon undergoing a first interrogation, confessed the fact of the *accouchement* having taken place, but averred that the child was still-born, and had been buried under a stone, near a staircase, which led up to a barn in the courtyard.

The judge, accompanied by a physician and a surgeon, searched the place which she had mentioned, but found neither stone, skeleton, nor any other indication of her story being true; they sought also in vain in every other place where there was the least probability of discovering any clue to the affair.

Upon this being told to the count's mother, she said that proceedings against this infamous woman ought to be immediately commenced. The preliminary procedure accordingly took place before the *juge d'instruction.*

Louise Goillard, in a second interrogation, averred that the countess had not been delivered at all; in a third, that she had had a miscarriage; in a fourth that

she had given birth to a boy whom Baulieu had carried off in a basket; in a fifth, on which occasion she answered from the *sellette*,[1] she asserted that the avowal of the *accouchement* of the countess had been drawn from her by violence.

In all her declarations she laid nothing to the charge of Madame de Bouillé, or the Marquis de Saint-Maixent.

As soon as she was imprisoned, she despatched her son, Guillemin, to the marchioness, to inform her merely that she had been arrested. The marchioness understood the threat, and was in great consternation. She immediately sent the Sieur de la Foresterie, her equerry, to the lieutenant-general, who was her counsel, and the mortal enemy of the count, that she might have his assistance in this emergency, and be instructed by what means she might assist the midwife, without in any manner appearing herself. The advice of the lieutenant-general was, to stifle the proceedings, and to obtain a decree prohibiting the continuation of the suit. By a lavish expenditure of money the marchioness obtained this decree; but almost immediately afterward it became useless, and the prohibition was removed.

La Foresterie had instructions afterward to proceed to Riom, where the sisters Quinet were now residing, and by a liberal use of money to induce them to persist in keeping the secret. The eldest of them, on leaving the service of the marchioness, to whose horrible secrets she was privy, had flourished her fists in her mistress's face, telling her that she should one day repent having turned them away, as she would confess everything, though she should be hanged for it. These girls now sent her word that they begged to return to her service;

[1] A stool on which prisoners were placed when examined under strong circumstances of suspicion.

that the countess had made them advantageous proposals, if they would speak out; that they had even been questioned in her name, but that as yet they had told nothing, but only asked for time to consider their answer. The marchioness was compelled to take back these girls; she kept the younger, and married the other to Delisle, her steward.

La Foresterie to whose ears (during these commissions with which he had been intrusted) some strange revelations had come, quitted the house disgusted with the service of such a mistress. The marchioness, on parting with him, addressed him in these words: "If you are indiscreet enough to reveal one word that you have heard from these girls, the Quinets, I shall punish you by the dagger of my steward Delisle." Having thus fortified her position, she believed herself safe from any attack; but it happened that a person of the name of Prudent Berger, gentleman and page of the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, who was in the confidence of his master, and had been to visit him at the Conciergerie, where he was imprisoned, threw some strange lights upon this affair. The marquis had told him the whole story of the *accouchement* of the countess, and the abduction of the child.

"I am astonished, monsieur," the page had answered, "that having so many troublesome affairs hanging over your head at present, you do not lighten your conscience of this one."

"It is my purpose," replied the marquis, "to give up this child to his father; I have been enjoined to do so by a priest, to whom I confessed having carried off the grandson of a marshal of France, and the son of the governor of a province."

The marquis was permitted to leave his prison from

time to time upon parole. This will not surprise those who know how strong a reliance was placed in those days upon the honour of a gentleman, even although he were the greatest criminal. The marquis, profiting by this privilege, took the page to see a beautiful child, about seven years old.

"Page," said he, "look well at this child, that you may recognise him when I send you to inquire about him."

He afterward confessed to the page that this was the son of the Comte de Saint-Géran, of whom he had spoken to him. These reports were spread at a time when other proceedings had commenced against the marquis, which left him no means of struggling against the discovery of his crimes. Officers of justice were sent to the Conciergerie, but the gaolers stopped them on their entrance, and informed them that the marquis was ill, and engaged with a clergyman from whom he was receiving the sacrament. As they insisted upon admission, the officers of the prison led the way to his cell. They met the clergyman coming out, who called to them to send immediately for persons to whom the marquis had a secret to reveal; that he was in a desperate state, and had confessed that he had poisoned himself. The party entered the cell. M. de Saint-Maixent was on his truckle-bed, rolling about in agony, now howling like a wild beast, now talking wildly and incoherently.

"Monsieur le Comte — send for him — the Comtesse de Saint-Géran — why do they not come?"

The officers drew near, and urged him to explain himself.

The marquis fell into a swoon; when he again opened his eyes he went on as before.

"Send for the countess. I wish their forgiveness — I will tell them all!"

To induce him to speak, one of the officers said that the count was there. The marquis turned toward them, faintly muttering, "I will tell you —" But he suddenly stopped, uttered one fearful cry, and expired.

It now appeared as if fate had resolved to stop every tongue from which the truth might escape. Nevertheless, this death-bed avowal of a revelation to make to the Comte de Saint-Géran, together with the deposition of the clergyman who attended the dying man, made a considerable addition in the evidence.

The court, collecting all the circumstances of the case which we have related, drew from them a body of proof which convinced every one of the truth. The carrier, the nurses, and the servants were brought forward; the various adventures of the child were traced, from the time of the *accouchement* until his arrival at the village of Descoutaux.

The judicial authorities, in tracing the origin of the crime, could not avoid criminating the Marquise de Bouillé; but there is reason to believe that they were prevented from this by a great effort of the Comte de Saint-Géran, who could not make up his mind to destroy his sister, whose dishonour would have been reflected upon himself. The marchioness brooded over her remorse in solitude, and never reappeared in society. She died some time afterward, carrying to the grave the burden of her guilty secret.

The court of Moulins finally passed sentence upon the midwife, accused and convicted of having carried off and concealed the countess's child, by which she was condemned to be hanged, after being put to the torture. The woman appealed against the sentence, and was afterward removed to the Conciergerie.

The proofs thus successively brought forward by these proceedings had already partially opened the eyes of the noble pair at Saint-Géran, and the affection which nature had long since planted in their breasts did the rest. They had now no remaining doubts that their page was no other than their son, and having made him throw off his menial dress, he was saluted by the titles due to his rank, and was called the Comte de la Palice.

In the mean time a person named Sequeville informed the countess of an important discovery made by him: this was that, in the year 1642, a child had been baptised at Saint Jean-en-Grève, and that a woman of the name of Pigoreau had been the principal party in the ceremony. A thorough investigation was instituted upon this intelligence, and it was discovered that the child had been suckled in the village of Torcy.

The child, when shown, in the presence of the court, to the nurses and the witnesses at Torcy, was instantly recognised by them, as well from the colour of his hair and eyes as from the mark of the midwife's fingers upon his head, which was still plainly visible. This indelible proof of the woman's crime became the principal evidence against her. The witnesses deposed that, upon the child being visited by Pigoreau, accompanied by a person who had the appearance of a man of quality, she frequently repeated that he was the son of a great nobleman, who had been confided to her care, and who, she trusted, would be the means of making, not only her fortune, but also the fortunes of all those who had assisted in bringing him up. The child's godfather, the grave-digger Paul Marmion, the grocer Raguenet, in whose hands the two thousand livres had been deposited, Pigoreau's servant, who had heard her say that the count was forced to take this child, and several wit-

nesses who had heard her say that he was of too noble birth to wear the livery of a page, made all together an unbroken chain of evidence; but this was not the whole. It was at Pigoreau's house that the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, accompanied by his page, had visited the child, who, residing at the hôtel de Saint-Géran, frequently went to see her as his mother. Prudent Berger, the marquis's page, instantly recognised the woman Pigoreau, and also identified the child as being the same he had seen at her house, and whose story the marquis had told him. These and other circumstances which transpired rendered it necessary to extend the accusation. A summons was issued against Pigoreau, who had not been involved in the previous proceedings.

The widow of the Duc de Ventadour, daughter of the wife of the deceased Maréchal de Saint-Géran by her second marriage, and sister of the count on the father's side, together with the Comtesse du Lude, daughter of the Marquise de Bouillé, from whom the young count would carry off the rich succession of M. de Saint-Géran, took great interest in this proceeding, and spoke of entering the lists against him. Pigoreau sought them out, and concerted joint measures with them. Then began that celebrated trial which long engrossed the attention of all France, — of a case similar to that decided by Solomon, in which a child was claimed by two mothers.

The Comte de Saint-Géran's adversaries in this cause were Pigoreau and the ladies Du Lude and De Ventadour. These ladies, doubtless, were sincere in disbelieving the existence of the crime; for if they had been aware of the truth, it is to be presumed they would not have been capable of holding out so long and so obstinately. The midwife had fallen sick in prison; but

they made common cause with her, and it was resolved that the parties accused should appeal against the criminal proceedings; that Pigoreau should petition against the judgment ordering her personal appearance and confrontation with the witnesses; and lastly, in order to create a greater diversion in their favour, that Pigoreau should deny the maternity of the countess by reclaiming the child as her own; and that the ladies should maintain that the *accouchement* of the countess was a mere fabrication, which had been arranged in order that she might adopt another child as her own. To put on a greater appearance of disinterestedness, the two ladies pretended that they had not had any previous understanding with Pigoreau.

At this juncture, the midwife died in prison of a disease aggravated by grief and remorse. After her death, her son Guillemin confessed that she had often told him that the countess had been delivered of a son, whom Baulieu had carried off, and that the child of whom Baulieu had undertaken the charge at the hôtel de Saint-Géran was the same who had been formerly carried off by him; this young man added that he had concealed this truth as long as it could prove injurious to his mother, and further, that the ladies De Ventadour and Du Lude had assisted her in prison with their money and advice.

The petition of the parties accused and the intervention of the ladies were discussed in seven sittings of the three chambers united. The trial crept on with all the slowness and against all the impediments of those times. After long and specious pleadings on both sides, Bignon, the advocate-general, took the side of the Comte and Comtesse de Saint-Géran; and by a judgment of the Court of the Tournelle, on the 18th of August, 1657, the

appeals of the ladies and the accused parties were dismissed, with fines and costs, and Pigoreau was prohibited from quitting the town and suburbs of Paris, on pain of conviction.

The ladies Du Lude and De Ventadour, and their party, were at first much cast down by this reverse of fortune, but they soon renewed the attack with greater vigour than ever. These ladies, who, in all the examinations, had taken Pigoreau with them in their carriage, suggested to her, as a means of keeping back the sentence, that she should present a new petition, demanding that the witnesses of the alleged pregnancy might be confronted with her. The court upon the 28th of August, 1658, issued an order to that effect, but with the condition that Pigoreau should within three days surrender herself a prisoner in the Conciergerie.

This proceeding, of which Pigoreau dreaded the consequences, terrified her to such a degree that, after weighing in her mind the profit she might derive from the trial, which would be lost to her by flight, against the danger in which she was placing her own life by thus venturing into the hands of the law, she gave up her cause, and secretly fled for refuge abroad. This last circumstance seemed sufficient to discourage the two ladies from any further resistance, but they were not yet at the end of their resources, or their obstinacy.

Pigoreau having been outlawed, and the proceedings against the other accused parties being ripe for judgment, the Comte de Saint-Géran set off for the Bourbonnais, in order to carry into effect the decree ordering the confrontation of witnesses.

He had scarcely arrived in the province when he was obliged to interrupt his labours to receive the king and the queen-mother, who passed through Moulins in